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WAR ON TWO FRONTS

HITHERTO March was Hitler's lucky month. This year the stars in their courses have fought against him. The 27th of March will stand out in our history as a day of miracles. While in Belgrade the Serbian officers were silently upsetting the Quislings who had betrayed their country's independence, Admiral Cunningham was steaming out of Alexandria to destroy the Italian fleet. On land, General Wavell, surveying the impregnable heights round Keren, had noticed a neglected valley through which this stronghold could be rushed by a surprise attack. Far to the South, the fall of Diredawa, after Harar, broke the one railway that links the Abyssinian capital with the outer world. What began on this astonishing Wednesday was carried to a triumphant conclusion during the following days. Not only did the Serb officers carry out their *coup d'état* with smooth efficiency and without bloodshed: they formed a truly national government, which has united the hesitating Croats and the Slovenes with the more resolute Serbs in a solid front of resistance to the Axis. In Eritrea, after the fall of Keren, the capital, Asmara, surrendered without attempting resistance.

The naval battle, fought at high speed over a long course to the south-west of Crete, resulted in the sinking of three big cruisers, the *Pola*, *Zara* and *Fiume*, armed with 8in. guns, and of two Italian destroyers, while the *Vittorio Veneto*, the swiftest battleship afloat and one of the most powerful, was heavily damaged. Beyond this, since the pursuit went on through the night, there is a margin of uncertainty; some experts argue that this battleship may have sunk and the loss of a fourth cruiser and two more destroyers is probable. On our side no ship was damaged; no man was even wounded and only two planes were lost. It seems that the sortie of the Italian fleet was risked, perhaps under German pressure, in order to cut off convoys carrying help from Egypt to Greece. Although the Italians were in superior force, their only thought, when the engagement began, was to make use of their advantage in speed to hurry back to port. The cruisers were destroyed by gunfire at short range, but the injuries to the battleship were inflicted by our dive-bombers, who plunged to within ten feet of the sea's surface to launch their torpedoes. Modern battleships are almost unsinkable, but experience shows that they are liable to something less than mortal injury from the air, when the attacking bombers combine reckless daring with skill. Though our ships went out of their way to rescue survivors, the loss of life among the Italian crews was heavy. Some Germans were among the prisoners.

The moral effect of this victory may be even greater than the material losses would justify, for it demonstrated once more that the Italians will not risk their ships, even when the odds are in their favour. Unless the Germans man what is left of the Italian Fleet, it is unlikely that it will fight again in this war. Our mastery of "their sea" is now assured. The further question is now whether we can win effective command of the Adriatic. This is more than ever desirable, because it would enable us to reach the Jugoslav armies, if and when they are attacked, at points where their supplies might soon run short. If the naval victory furthers our prospects in the main Balkan battlefield, so also do our successes in East Africa. Like all General Wavell's operations, this complex enterprise has been admirably timed. The campaigning season in Abyssinia closes about the end of April when the rains descend. Since the surrender of Asmara, we may consider that Eritrea is in our possession; Massawa, vulnerable from the sea, is not a serious obstacle. Several converging armies are closing in on Addis Ababa; when it falls, only "mopping-up" operations remain to be completed. The conclusion would seem to be that some of the seasoned troops and aircraft now in East Africa will soon be available for a Balkan campaign.

The Serbian *coup d'état* has disorganised German plans. The march into Greece through the Struma and Mesta passes can hardly begin with six hostile Jugoslav armies mobilised on its flank. Two of these armies could soon finish off the Italians in Albania. Again, might not the better prospect that now opens up, induce the Turks to join the Greeks in a counter-attack? On the other hand, the Jugoslavs must play for time and are bound to exercise caution, because

most of the flat country of Croatia and their own capital Belgrade can be easily over-run. The Germans, by the usual dodge of atrocity stories, seem to be seeking a *casus belli* against the Serbs, while they try, with no apparent success, to divide them from the Croats. But it will take them some time to mass their forces to meet the new situation. And when they have done it, they will be faced by what they most dread, war on two fronts. At Athens Mr. Eden and Sir John Dill have a hopeful campaign to organise.

A Chance for India ?

Because a few Divisions of Indian troops, hereditary soldiers from the picked "martial" races, have fought gallantly in Africa, we are apt to forget that the mass of the Indian population is still unreconciled. Of its leading men over three thousand are suffering imprisonment for their protests because we dragged them into our war without their consent. To break the deadlock a conference of moderates has met in Bombay and drafted some reasonable suggestions. Unfortunately, though these groups include some of the ablest men in India, lawyers, bankers and intellectuals, they can claim little if any mass support. Nor do their suggestions offer any means of ending or circumventing the main difficulty—the refusal of the Muslims under Mr. Jinnah's leadership to accept the democratic technique of government by majority. The Bombay Conference has repeated the proposal that the Viceroy's Executive Council should be enlarged and composed of leading non-official Indians. This, it suggests, should function during the war as if it were *de facto* the Cabinet of a self-governing Dominion. A definite undertaking should be given now that within a brief time-limit after the end of the war, full Dominion status shall be conferred. The outline is promising, but will not the old difficulties recur as soon as the details are filled in ? All three of the main parties, Congress, the Muslim League and the Conservative Hindu Mahasabha stand rigid in an attitude of non-co-operation. The only happier sign is that Mr. Jinnah has recently offered to co-operate in the forming of an Indian Executive, provided he receives a promise that his plan for dividing India into separate Muslim and Hindu nations shall be considered after the war. We do not know whether he has dropped his wrecking claim for "parity." The *Times* backs these proposals. Assuredly the Government will put itself heavily in the wrong, if it hesitates to take them up. But we fear they come too late, as the offer of Home Rule came to Ireland. Thanks to imprisonment and delay, the Dominion idea has lost much of its attraction for Indians. We should boldly imitate the plan followed by the United States in its dealings with the Filipinos—an offer of independence after a specified time-limit (say ten years from the peace) qualified only by a standing military alliance. If we could bring ourselves to do this, the interval of a few years could be smoothly bridged.

France and the Blockade

The whole problem of the relationship of France to our blockade has been reopened by the brush between our warships and a French convoy in the Western Mediterranean. The convoy, hugging the Spanish African coast, got through the Straits unmolested. Then, when our ships claimed the right of search, French coastal batteries opened fire and the convoy got safely into harbour at Nemours. French bombers then attacked our ships but did no damage. Our case is that to our knowledge one of the convoyed ships was carrying rubber for the Germans. This Admiral Darlan denies ; he also complains that it was in French territorial waters that we proposed to do our searching. This latter point raises the question whether France is a neutral whose territory we are bound to respect. Our obvious reply is that by the confession of her rulers she is "loyally collaborating" with the enemy. In such a case international law loses its meaning—as it does in the odd business of the Axis ships in American ports, which have been seized when their crews began to sabotage them. The decisive fact in our dealings with France is, as Mr. Dalton told the Commons, that out of 500,000 tons which entered the port of Marseilles in two months, more than half, perhaps even 80 per cent., went to Germany and Italy. These cargoes included oil, rubber and aluminium. This is a serious hole in the blockade.

Soviet Trade

This blockade-running by France, which has been continuous and increasing since June last year, has just received official acknowledgment. By way of contrast we note that official circles have been making a constant clamour about the much smaller "leak through Vladivostok." The point becomes of increased significance now that developments in the Balkans inspire the Government, as Mr. Butler tells us, with the hopes of greatly improved relations with the U.S.S.R. No one should expect at this juncture an armed or even economic intervention by the U.S.S.R. on our side. But it is manifest that Russia is following our fate with an anxiety which might be changed into sympathy. This has been acknowledged even by Mr. Sumner Welles who really cannot be called a pro-Bolshie. What then is there in the charges which have been repeatedly made by Mr. Dalton against the Soviet ? Russia has indeed increased her imports from the U.S.A. But at the same time she has had to discontinue her imports from elsewhere as a result of the war. Russia always was an importer and exporter of the same commodities. This is due to her geographic situation, the enormous distances between the different parts of the country. Except for cotton (and her imports of that commodity are *exactly one per cent. of her own production*) the total imports of Russia from the U.S.A. do not cover even her normal total imports. And a greater part of her imports of oil, copper, etc., came from countries from which she cannot hope to import now. It would be welcome if the Soviet would publish the relevant figures.

No Theatres on Sunday

No spectacle, as Macaulay said, is so ridiculous as the British public in one of its periodical fits of morality ; Tuesday's debate in the House of Commons was a remarkable illustration of this truth. Members, revelling in their freedom from the Party Whip, voted down Sunday theatres and, forgetful of Sunday cinemas, Sunday pubs and Sunday golf, hailed the result as a triumph of Christianity over paganism. The *Times* represents it as a victory for the ancient tradition and will probably go on to claim it as further evidence of the eclipse of the highbrow. What is this ancient tradition ? This is best answered by asking what was the Government's proposal. The proposal was not to make the first breach in Sabbatarian quiet since medieval times. The Order in Council was to amend the Defence Regulations so as to give competent industrial authorities in any area the power to make representations to the local authority for the opening of theatres and music-halls on Sundays. The debate on this issue was a farrago of inconsistent and puerile arguments. Thus while one member pleaded that nothing should be done to destroy the soul of England and allow Sunday to become a Continental Sunday, another member in his support declared that people preferred the dusk and sentiment of the cinemas where they could hold each other's hands. The same member who insisted that Sunday should be kept in accordance with our great national traditions held that it would be far better to supply an existing demand for more outdoor games than to create a demand for more indoor shows. The member who denounced the proposal as an open defiance of God and a direct challenge to the Churches went into the same voting lobby as the member who thought people ought to be satisfied with the pubs and the B.B.C. variety programmes. The fantastic union of members who conceived of the whole problem in terms of undesirable leg-shows and those who apparently thought that attendance at a performance of *Hamlet* represented a species of "gadding about" likely to lead to an increase in mental troubles was sufficient to kill the proposal by 8 votes. We are a "sweet, reasonable, clean and Christian nation" in the proportion of 144 to 136.

Economic Notes (*by an Industrial Correspondent*)

The Prime Minister's remarks on Trade Unions at last week's luncheon to Mr. Winant must have been read by a good many people with mixed feelings. When Mr. Churchill said that "the employers of the country are deeply thankful that there is in existence a strong organised trade union movement with which they can deal, and which keeps its bargains, and which moves along a strongly controlled and suitable path of policy," he was perhaps addressing himself in part to those American employers who are endangering the output of war material by refusing to recognise the rights of collective bargaining ;

but he was also stressing certain features of trade union development in Great Britain with which by no means all Trade Unionists are in sympathy. He was, in effect, patting the trade union leaders on the back for their good behaviour, not merely under war conditions, but also in time of peace. He even went on to hammer in the point by asserting that Trade Unionists are "practical men," and associating them with his "war aim" of building "a society in which there shall be wealth and culture, but where wealth shall not prey on commonwealth nor culture degenerate into class and pride." In effect, the Prime Minister was enunciating to a mixed audience of employers and trade union leaders (the lunch to Mr. Winant was given jointly by the Trades Union Congress and the Employers' Federation) a doctrine of class-reconciliation in the best Tory-Democratic manner. He was assuming—and was he much wrong?—that the Trade Union leaders whom he was addressing had no particular fancy for Socialism and were quite prepared to accept a "war aim" which implied the survival of the capitalist system after the war. In fact, he was celebrating, in his capacity as Conservative leader, the incorporation of Trade Unionism into the structure of British Society, without any fundamental change in the nature of British institutions.

* * *

On the same day, the Prime Minister spoke to his own party about the need for national unity, not only during the war, but also in handling the problems of reconstruction after it. There, of course, he was making the same assumption—that we are going back after the war to a society in which the claims of property will be recognised much as before, and the old class divisions will persist. I doubt whether many of the leading Trade Unionists who listened to him at the Winant lunch were conscious of any incongruity in applauding his remarks. Mr. Churchill is popular with the Trade Unionists, as he is with the rest of the public, as a war leader; but there is more to it than that. It is a curious fact that, while the logic of events is pressing this country rapidly towards an economic structure compatible with either Fascism or Socialism, but hardly with anything between, the Trade Unions are becoming less Socialist, and more inclined to limit their objects to the defence of their members' short-run interests under capitalism. No one in his senses wants the Trade Unions to turn militant just now, in any form in which militancy would impede the war effort. But it makes an old Trade Unionist like myself uncomfortable to feel that Trade Unionism is becoming more and more incorporated into the present economic order, and therewith less and less capable of taking the lead in a movement for thorough social reconstruction on a new economic basis.

* * *

Meanwhile, in the United States, certain strikes called by the Congress of Industrial Organisations are holding up important war work. The force behind these strikes is the desire to use the present opportunity for compelling employers who have hitherto refused to have any dealings with Trade Unions to accept the right of collective bargaining. This many big American firms are still most unwilling to do. They prefer their "company unions," which can be used on occasion as strike-breaking agencies; and in some cases they even refuse to accept the simulacrum of collective negotiation. Unions thus denied all rights of existence can hardly be blamed for seizing their chance, now that it has come. How far the President's new Mediation Board will succeed in forcing the hands of recalcitrant employers has still to be seen. The situation is complicated by the natural readiness of Nazi agents and anti-war Communists to seize on any opportunity that offers itself for stirring up trouble. But the basic factor is that American big business is still nearly as unwilling as ever to accept collective bargaining, and quite as ready to denounce as a Communist agitator anyone who attempts to organise the unorganised or to assert any kind of working-class claim. The position would be much easier if only the A.F. of L. and the C.I.C. could forget their quarrels; but the dispute between craft unionists and industrial unionists remains as bitter as ever, and stands, even more than personalities, in the way of an agreement.

* * *

The spread of compulsion to civil defence services was bound to come, unless the authorities were prepared to make the voluntary system work by a big improvement in the conditions of service. Three pounds ten shillings is not, in these days, at all an attractive wage for hard and exacting labour, even when allowances are thrown in for men who have to work away from home. Compulsory service is not to mean military discipline, any more than it does for men whom the Minister of Labour orders to go and work in a particular factory. The actual employer will continue in most cases to be the local authority; and the "conscripts" will work under the same conditions as the volunteers. But clearly this spread of compulsion in civil employment must mean a big change in the conditions of discipline—and a dangerous change, unless steps are taken along with it to democratise working life. I suppose the main reason why there is no shop stewards' movement developing in this war at all comparable with that which grew up between 1914 and 1918 is that, nowadays, the men are much more tired, live farther from work, and find much greater difficulty in meeting. The absence of rank and file movements is, I think, to be regretted; for, despite their inconvenience at times to harassed managements, they are a valuable safety-valve for democracy.

Concentration Bill (*from Our Parliamentary Correspondent*)

In the debate on concentration of industry, the President of the Board of Trade did much better than was generally expected. Although he was obviously nervous he did not follow the unsatisfactory habit of some of the more seasoned Ministers by sticking religiously to the text provided by his permanent officials. He spoke with commendable freedom and with obvious detailed knowledge of the subject he was expounding. Nevertheless, the case he put before the House was unsatisfactory.

Hammersley, Conservative Member for Willesden, put his finger on the weakest spots in an able speech made towards the end of the debate. Hammersley, who has interests in the cotton and rayon industries, should go far in politics because of his advanced independent thought on industrial matters. "I should like," he said, "to have it made clear by the Government that a monopoly capitalism will not be established, whatever happens, and that we are not to go back to *laisser-faire*. I do not know whether this Government would go so far as to say that the welfare of the major industries will be made a national responsibility. Such units as are thought desirable should be reopened in such places as are desirable, and prices of goods should be under some form of national control. I hope it will be made clear by the Government that those things will be done, and that every man in industry worth his salt, whether workman, manager, administrator or engineer, who can contribute usefully to that industry, will either be employed or fully compensated. . . . The people of this country would know that all the talk they hear, and the perorations on Sunday evening on the wireless, about the building up of a new order after the war was not just talk or dreams, but that all these schemes, together with the announcement by the Government of the development which was to take place after the war, would lay well and truly the foundations of such a new social order."

The real moral of the concentration of industry debate lies elsewhere. These proposals which, despite denials by the President of the Board of Trade, will bring about profound changes in the industrial and social structure, were not adequately debated by the House. They were, of course, fully discussed from the point of view of individual industries. While several back-benchers, like Hammersley, dealt with underlying principles by no means ineffectively, the broad general principles involved did not receive the consideration they merited. For this the ex-Ministers in the House are largely responsible. Back-benchers, however able, have neither the prestige nor the Parliamentary experience to drive home their views with full effect. Ex-Ministers have the experience for such purposes derived from tenure of their high offices, but they are not carrying out the traditional job of ex-Ministers in criticising Government policies and measures on the floor of the House.

This stricture applies neither to Shinwell nor Winterton. The former is obviously tired after his efforts over the last six months to keep healthy opposition going in the House. Experienced back-benchers like Aneurin Bevan also play a weighty part. Surely Burgin, with his experience at the Board of Trade and Ministry of Supply, should have done more than merely skim over the surface in this debate? Since he left office, Oliver Stanley never appears in the House. Walter Elliot is seldom seen and never intervenes in debate. Burgin appears more frequently but rarely takes part in discussion. It may be that the political reputations of some of these men were tarnished in office, but they have now an opportunity of building reputations anew by doing their duty on the floor of the House in the most critical days in the whole history of this country. It is difficult to believe that any war work they may be doing in Whitehall or elsewhere can equal the contribution they could make on the floor of the House at this juncture. Hore-Belisha has not appeared in the House since the Christmas recess. Indisposition accounted, at any rate, for the earlier weeks of his absence. The contributions he made to debates last autumn would be even more valuable now.

Regular attendance cannot be expected from Mr. Lloyd George. That he is to speak in the food production debate for which he asked with Winterton is welcome news. Does it presage his more active participation in debates on the major issues now impending?

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THE BRITISH TRADITION

On March 27th Mr. Churchill made two speeches. Addressing a lunch given to the new American Ambassador, by the British Employers' Confederation and the T.U.C., the Prime Minister made a pledge that Trade Union "privileges shall be restored and resumed when this crisis has passed away, unless some other better arrangement can be made." In making this promise the Prime Minister was acknowledging that full Trade Union co-operation is indispensable during the war, and recognising the political influence that the Trade Union movement would exercise after it. He said that if the democracies emerged victorious from the war

> there will be an electric atmosphere in the world which may render possible an advance towards a greater and broader social unity and justice than could otherwise have been achieved in peace-time in a score of years. We are not theorists or doctrinaires; Trade Unionists are practical men aiming at practical results. I might say that our aim will be to build a society where there will be wealth and culture, but where wealth shall not prey on commonwealth nor culture degenerate into class and pride.

He put the matter rather differently when talking to the Conservative Association. Speaking, both as leader of the Conservative Party and as Prime Minister of the National Government, he stressed the crucial importance of national unity in the war, and said, oddly enough, that "no Party has sacrificed more than the Conservative Party with its large parliamentary majority." He hoped that national unity could be maintained in a period of reconstruction after the war, and was encouraged to this hope by the comradeship that had grown up during the crisis between Labour, Liberal and Conservative members of the National Government. He told the Conservatives that anyone who falls below the level of this high spirit of national unity, which alone can give national salvation, is blameworthy:

> I know it is provoking when speeches are made which seem to suggest that the whole structure of our decent British life and society, which we have built up so slowly and patiently across the centuries, will be swept away for some new order or other, the details of which are largely unannounced.

Mr. Churchill's proposal that national unity should be maintained after the war has been anticipated by other Ministers, including Sir Archibald Sinclair, the Leader of the Liberal Party. Since memories of the Khaki Election of 1918 are still very much alive, this appeal carries weight with a large number of people of all Parties. And when Mr. Churchill speaks of the "structure of our decent British life and society," he also touches a chord that is more responsive than it would have been a few months ago. In this war England has become far more conscious of its national tradition; about some of it we may feel proud; about other aspects our increased consciousness means an heightened sense of shame. The Prime Minister himself is pre-eminently representative of an important part of the British tradition. He has in a high degree those qualities of courage and humour which we like to regard as among our national characteristics. His unique capacity for leadership in the present situation is far more the product of his bulldog qualities than of his military knowledge or parliamentary gifts. But he also represents the traditional structure of Britain in another sense. He belongs to the England of great families and great estates; he revels in the story of British military prowess; he is the descendant and historian of the great Duke of Marlborough; he has been brought up as a beneficiary of that structure of wealth and privilege which, in spite of its better aspects, seems to many to-day by no means decent. England to him is still a gem set in a silver sea with its communications secured by its navy and its wealth and comfort based upon conquests and investments which make the coloured peoples our hewers of wood and drawers of water. At home, this decent structure of English society has meant much that is kind and pleasant. It is indeed decent in comparison with the slavery of Nazidom. It has maintained, to an almost unequalled degree, a lovely countryside where agricultural labourers, the descendants of a free peasantry, work on the enclosed estates of English gentlemen. This decent structure embodies what has been correctly called the English religion of inequality. Class distinctions are still the basis of English life; the structure of England is founded on a dual system of education even more than on the basic division between rich and poor. Does the decent British life and society of which Mr. Churchill speaks include the slums of Glasgow and Liverpool, the poverty stricken chaos of the East End, the existence of a vast army of unemployed, the maintenance of a system in which a large part of the population lives on a bare subsistence level, while a considerable number is definitely below it? Does the structure of our decent British life, which Mr. Churchill loves, involve the retention of a propertied system which makes so many of us uncomfortable in our minds even while it keeps our bodies in comfort?

The Conservative audience which listened to Mr. Churchill will have been reassured by his speech, only if, as we suspect, they are for the most part completely out of touch with the questioning public which has been shaken out of its complacency by the war. Mr. Attlee showed that he was aware of this public when he said in his speech last Sunday that national unity for the purposes of fighting the war did not mean that we should put our thinking or our determination for social change into cold storage for the duration. No one will suspect the *Times* of desiring to disrupt the tradition of England, but even the *Times* has published in pamphlet form a series of articles making proposals about such matters as the abolition of unemployment and the enforcement of a basic standard of nutrition, which, if carried into effect, would be not far short of a social revolution. Is not Mr. Churchill deceived if he really imagines that the whole traditional structure of England can be maintained? From the Conservative point of view the political situation looks rosy enough. They dominate a House of Commons, elected in 1935, marvellous to recall, on a cry of "collective security." The balance of this House has been but little modified by by-elections and it is now utterly unrepresentative.

Mr. Churchill spoke of the "great sacrifices" made by the Conservative Party with its majority in the House. What are these sacrifices? If there had been an election last May, when the Labour Members joined Mr. Churchill in forming a Government, we venture to assert that the Conservative Party would have been represented by a minority in the House of Commons. The sacrifices of the political truce have been on the other side. The great employers have indeed every reason for gratification with the way events have developed. Last May Mr. Churchill and Mr. Attlee foreshadowed great changes in the structure of decent British life; Labour Members could in that period have inaugurated sweeping reforms. The Conservative Party could have refused them no measure of social reconstruction for which they cared to ask. But they did not ask: it was they—and the rank and file of working people—who made sacrifices for the sake of national unity.

Has the structure of British life not changed because Labour did not insist on changing it in their direction? The smaller employer is now rapidly disappearing, but the big capitalist is vastly strengthening his power and increasing his resources for the future. When a great captain of industry is taken from his private firm to work in Whitehall, he is not sacrificing anything. The whole tendency towards monopoly control which had been proceeding for a generation before the war is immensely accelerated. A Conservative employer listening to Mr. Churchill may well have smiled to himself as he considered the incidence of sacrifice. He is to be patient during the war, to keep on good terms with Trade Unionists and accept the co-operation of Labour leaders in the assurance that, at the end of the war, he will find himself and his friends impregnably fortified in supreme control, while Labour leaders, who have developed such close ties of friendship with their Tory colleagues, are asked to see to it that unity is preserved during a period of reconstruction which will consolidate the new monopolistic structure for the future.

Those who expose this present development and point to the dangers of political quiescence during the war are not to be silenced by being told that they are endangering national unity. The position does not remain stationary during the war; on the contrary, as we have suggested, a vast transformation of society is taking place in which the power is increasingly falling into the hands of a very few individuals. That real danger to national unity lies in this process should be obvious enough. The political truce serves to hide from the House of Commons much that is occurring in the country. Those who continue to speak in the provinces and who take the trouble to dig beneath the surface unity (which depends on nothing except a determination not to yield to Hitler) report that acceptance of the structure of Mr. Churchill's England is becoming a rare state of mind. It is rare in the Services, rare in the workshops, rare in the blitzed towns. Never in history has the House of Commons—or for that matter the press—been so out of touch with the common people. Labour leaders, who will meet some of the rank and file at their Whitsuntide Conference, will discover, we believe, an uneasiness based on a fairly shrewd appraisal of the situation, and they will have to listen to expressions of this uneasiness in spite of the ban on all but the official resolutions. Valuing their position as leaders, the Labour members of this Government are likely in the coming year to find themselves increasingly compelled

to make demands which the Conservative Association will call a menace to national unity. At the end of the war, unless there has been real progress towards equality, they will find that the Labour Party has ceased to appeal to millions who hoped that it was the organ of social change. They need never experience that bitterness, if they have courage now. Mr. Bevin has already shown on a number of issues that when Labour leaders are not frightened by their Tory colleagues, they can, in fact, make gains for the workers during the war which may in some degree offset the increase of the employers' power. If Mr. Churchill remembers that to millions of Englishmen the " British tradition " is as truly or more truly embodied in the cry " Wilkes and liberty," in the Tolpuddle Martyrs and the Chartist Movement as it is in the victories of Marlborough and Nelson, his hope of maintaining national unity after the war may be based on more secure foundations than we now believe it to be.

We do not for ourselves expect the results of any great war to be pleasant; we expect, after the war, not a Utopia but a bitter struggle with the same vested interests which mocked the sacrifices of the last war when it came to making the peace; which threw overboard the fine hopes of reconstruction which were planned in such detail in 1919; which, through their selfish and shortsighted policies during the twenty years' armistice, wrecked the hopes of world peace, rearmed Hitler, tried to get into partnership with the Nazis and now expect us in the name of national unity to repeat this agreeable chapter of history at the end of this war. The arguments against a Khaki election are easy to follow; obviously there are advantages in a party truce during the period of peace-making and reconstruction. Whether such a prolonged period of truce is possible obviously depends on the changes that have occurred during the war and the balance of social forces in the country. We can scarcely imagine for instance, that millions of men in uniform, waiting to be demobilised, will look with confidence to this antique and unrepresentative House of Commons. That it should continue for as long as three years after the war will seem preposterous. The only terms on which any period of continued truce is conceivable are terms which include the utilisation of the war period to build up a more egalitarian and not a more monopolistic and privileged society, and the recognition that at the end of the war, reconstruction will involve many social changes which are not in the Tory conception of the decent structure of British life and society.

THE COST OF LIVING AND DYING

FOR over thirty years we have relied on a Cost of Living Index based on family budgets collected soon after the Boer War. We may be forgiven for not revising the Index before 1914, more particularly as the science of nutrition was then unknown except to a few visionaries. Lamentable inaction during the twenty uneasy years following the Armistice is, however, an accurate reflection of our failure to understand that, " How the people of England live is one of the most important questions that can be considered; for it is the complement of the primary question teaching men how to live a longer, healthier, and happier life. Armed with this golden bough, we may enter the gloomy kingdom of the dead, whither have gone in twenty years nine thousand thousand English children, fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, daughters, sons . . ." Written by that great humanist, Dr. William Farr, from the General Register Office on February 5th, 1875, these words are no less true on February 5th, 1941.

The condition of the people must always be at the root of all political doctrine in a democratic system. In such a system controversy should centre round their welfare. But in debating, in legislating, in organising, and in comparing the work of one Parliament with another, what objective measurements are used to find whether life is better or worse and to what extent the health and happiness of the many fall below the standard achieved by the few? The answer is none, for such attempts at comparison as are made are usually subjective. Now, with the publication of the results of the Ministry of Labour's inquiry into working-class budgets, the question that is being asked is what has happened to the standard of life of the English people since the first Cost of Living Index was computed. And this, according to Farr, should lead us to inquire what lessons we can learn from the deaths of sixteen million men, women and children that occurred during the interval between the first inquiry and the second.

The answer given by most intelligent people would be that, first, the rate of dying has been greatly reduced, and second, the standard of life of the average working-class household has risen. Broadly speaking, they would be right, the second factor having determined the first. Indeed, it would have been incredible had there been no improvement, for in that case we should have stood alone in the world. Very few would argue that the lives of the workers and of the submerged tenth are not better to-day than they were over thirty years ago, but those who have fought the battle of the many, year in and year out, gaining a little here, a concession there, are not content. They see that the chasm separating what is and what—plus science—might be is immeasurably wider to-day. Poverty we have always had, but not until this dark hour of a gifted age have we had the means of radiating plenty.

Not unnaturally, therefore, the supreme question stirring in man's mind in the midst of war is that of inequality: the paradox of merriment *and* misery, wealth *and* poverty. We have raised the standard of living of the worker and we have gained for him a few more years of life, but have we, in so doing, achieved any reduction in the differentials of life and death as between the rich and the poor? This, and this alone, is the vital issue.

The *Times* in a widely discussed and remarkable leading article, " Foundations," states that: " In the last quarter of a century taxation has done much in this country to mitigate the most glaring inequalities in wealth and possessions." Owing to the paucity of statistical data on the trend in class incomes and the ownership of wealth (apart from the known increase in the number of millionaires) there is little objective information to confirm this view. If the curve in working-class real incomes (allowing for unemployment) is examined, we can conclude that, although " it is doubtful if on the average real wages at the end of 1924 were higher or lower than in 1913 " (Bowley, 1926), the period since 1924 has probably resulted in an improvement of the *average* standard of living. Yet, taken as a whole, the record of the forty years of the present century has been distinctly inferior, when judged by the percentage rate of change, to that of the last forty years of the nineteenth century. But this and other measurements in terms of money incomes do not help us to decide whether inequality has grown or lessened. What other indices have we? We cannot, as yet, measure vitality and good health; records of malnutrition and morbidity are of a far too subjective character, and unfortunately we have no comparable surveys for pre-1914 to measure against the findings of Sir John Orr and his fellow workers in the 1930's. We must, therefore, turn back to the advice of Dr. William Farr and learn what we can from " the gloomy kingdom of the dead." There is, after all, much sense in this. The standard of life largely determines the date of death. Many diseases are rooted in poverty and tuberculosis is the most sensitive of them all.

The Registrar-General divides the population into five great social classes, at one end is Class I representing the most-favoured section and at the other, Class V (the unskilled). The latest material we have on social class mortality was published in 1938 and is based on the years 1930–2. We may first examine one of the most delicate indices, namely, infant mortality by social class of father and compare the experience of 1930–2 with 1910–2, the latter being the earliest period for which an analysis can be made. The greatest reduction in infant mortality has taken place for the ages 6–12 months. This is the period during which environmental influences are at their peak so far as the first year of life is involved. But we are not concerned here with the actual details of the rates for the two periods; we are interested in inequalities. For deaths during the first month Class V mortality exceeded Class I by 106 per cent. in 1910–2. By 1930–2 this excess had fallen to 66 per cent. If hereditary influences and physical selection can be held accountable for excess mortality, it is during the first month of life that such factors exert their greatest influence. At the ages 1–3 months the respective excesses for the two periods are 180 and 239 per cent.—a significant upward trend. At 3–6 months the excess and the increase grow, the figures being 253 and 330 per cent. But at 6–12 months the cumulative pressure of social circumstances raised the gap between the infants of the rich and of the poor to 299 per cent. in 1910–2 and 498 per cent. in 1930–2. This means, in other words, that for every two infants of the rich dying between their sixth and twelfth month the poor lost ten babies. " It is incredible," writes the Registrar-General in another context, " that hereditary selection or differing standards of the mother's health, which have been shown to be highly correlated with infant mortality as a whole, should be more operative in later than in earlier infancy and it must be concluded, therefore, that the great bulk of the excess of urban over rural mortality is directly due to environmental and economic influences." Similarly, the growth since 1910–2 of mortality excess in Class V during 11 out of the first 12 months of life cannot be attributed to other than greater differences in environ-

mental and economic influences. For cause of death no comparison can be made with 1910–2, but we can state that for a group of preventible diseases (tuberculous diseases, bronchitis and pneumonia, diarrhœa and enteritis) Class V excess mortality during the first year of life has risen from 383 per cent. in 1921–3 to 449 per cent. If, for 1930–2 alone, we take a large depressed area of the country and examine differences in social class mortality within that area we find that for preventible diseases under the age of one Class V returns an excess of 779 per cent. Whilst the rich lose two children the poor bury sixteen.

At the ages 1–2 years the story is the same—a Class V excess in 1930–2 of 406 per cent. No comparable figures are available for an earlier period, neither have we any data for any year to cover the ages 2–16.

The bulk of the material on social class mortality relates to males only for the ages 20–65. Comparisons are possible with 1910–2 and with 1921–3, but for a number of reasons it is wise to restrict an analysis to ages 20–45. It is during these years that the unceasing struggle for existence, the fear of unemployment and the burden of children weaken health and vitality and open the way for the onset of environmental disease. Here again we are not concerned with the absolute rates, although some show little or no reduction. We are concerned with inequality and its trend. For the purposes of this analysis it was essential to group Classes I and II (the rich, professional and comfortable middle classes) and Classes IV and V (semi-skilled and unskilled). Class III represents the skilled workers. It is also necessary to use a second set of figures which exclude deaths by violence, as road accidents, industrial fatalities, etc., bear little or no relationship to the health of the victim.

INDEX OF EXCESS OR DEFICIENCY OF CLASSES III AND IV-V OVER CLASSES I–II AT EACH PERIOD (CLASSES I-II = 100)

England and Wales. Males aged 20–45. Based on standardised rates.

	1910–2	1921–3	1930–2
Classes I–II	100–100	100–100	100–100
„ III	99–96	105–104	114–118
„ IV–V	122–120	127–126	130–138

(The first columns represent deaths from all causes, the second excludes deaths by violence.)

From these few figures it is perfectly clear that, in terms of health, inequality has greatly increased since 1910–2 for men aged from 20–45. As for married women of the same ages, although we can make no comparison with earlier years, their range of inequality was greater than that for men in 1930–2.

Dr. Farr was right. Those who have died may teach those who remain how to live. They will not have died in vain if those who are to be the architects of the new order learn well.

RICHARD M. TITMUSS

WAR-AIMS FOR PILGRIMS

ON Thursday of last week Mr. Churchill made his plea for silence over war-aims. On Tuesday, Lord Halifax gave to the world the first dim outline of the Government's plans. His speech to the Pilgrims was mainly an essay on morals, but there were in it clear hints on some more mundane matters. Where he lapsed into a definite detail, he was evidently making a calculated disclosure of decisions reached by the War Cabinet. The main tendency of his speech, emphasised in a talk with journalists next day, was to suggest that the future International Community, formed under Anglo-American leadership, will resemble rather the British Commonwealth of Nations than the League of Nations. It is to be world-wide in its scope; that is to say it will not be the European Federation of which some of us have dreamed. Its membership will be restricted to States which "ensure individual liberty within their borders." Its purpose will be to further "economic welfare" as well as "mutual defence," with the stress rather on the former objective. Lord Halifax was silent as to economic planning and seemed to rely rather on an approach to free trade—"the greatest possible interchange of goods and services." Finally, he prepared us for the unilateral disarmament of Germany, for the victors are "to retain sufficient armed strength to make their will effective." He implied, though he did not say it explicitly, that she will be excluded from the new Community for a considerable time.

The main difficulty in interpreting this speech is to decide how much or how little is meant by the rejection of the League and the adoption of the British Commonwealth as a model. It would be foolish to build too much on this hint; it occurred, however, in very plain language in speeches by Conservative ministers, when they moralised on the collapse of the League. It is an idea that has long haunted them. We may take it that Mr. Churchill's offer of federal union to the French has been dropped and will not be revived—much as Cromwell had to drop the offer of "coalescence" with the Dutch. The British Commonwealth is the loosest organisation imaginable. The League was based on a tightly drawn Covenant and did its business through a partly elected Council, an annual Assembly of delegates and a standing Secretariat. The Commonwealth lacks all of these. Apart from infrequent conferences, it functions through informal consultations between Downing Street and the individual Dominions: it does not deliberate as a unit. This plan implies that leadership and initiative rest with the Mother-Country. It works happily where there is community of race, tradition and language, but much less happily in the cases of South Africa and Eire.

No one doubts that our country and the United States must take the initiative in forming the new Community. Their power and population will give them a natural and inevitable ascendancy for many a decade to come. But to seek to stereotype and formalise their predominance by copying this Commonwealth model would be to wreck the whole venture at the start. It will be easy to attract a modest but highly civilised little State like Norway. The difficulty will be to bring in a once proud Power like France. The more we underline Anglo-American leadership, as the *Times* has done, the more stubbornly will she stay outside. We should then risk the formation, sooner or later, of a rival League in Europe. The South American States, which were at home in the League, will not take kindly to this new idea. No one would propose to copy the Commonwealth model literally; evidently a Charter of Rights is contemplated. Then is anything gained by using a phrase which hostile critics will at once interpret as a half-conscious avowal of imperialist ambitions? The new Community cannot dispense with some central representative organ which deliberates and decides.

The intention seems to be, though Lord Halifax did not mention it, to further the formation in Europe of several federal units. The Czechs and Poles may form one, the Balkan States another. A Latin-Catholic bloc of France, Italy, and Spain may also come into being. The effect would be to encircle and neutralise Germany. This looks like a modification of the old technique of the Balance of Power, and an attempt to base peace on the discredited pattern of military alliances. It would be fatal to any sound economic planning. The Balkan States can do little trade with one another. Their chief customer is inevitably Germany. Why then erect a barrier of bayonets between the farmer and his market? These schemes defy economics much as the Versailles settlement did. The better plan would be to create, within the bigger world-wide organisation, a European Federation.

How much is intended by the proposal to exclude States which fail to ensure "individual liberty"? This formula shuts out Russia. But has Lord Halifax reflected that it also excludes States like Spain which have enjoyed his favours, our ancient ally Portugal, our gallant ally Greece and several Latin-American Republics? The principle of exclusion can be justified only if it is honestly applied, against the Right as well as the Left. My own suggestion would be to confine it to the political councils of the Community. It would shatter any economic organisation. Raw materials could never be controlled, if we excluded Communist Russia and Fascist Brazil. Nor could the transport system of Europe be co-ordinated, if a vacuum yawned in German territory. Again, in the matter of mutual defence, if one leaves unprotected an illiberal State of the second or third rank which occupies a strategic position, will it not seek another protector? It would be fatally easy to evade these difficulties by turning a blind eye to the shortcomings of friendly Fascist Powers. In the practice of selective vision the Foreign Office has had a long and adequate training.

In his brief but carefully worded passage about Germany, Lord Halifax was wholly negative, nor did he refer to other Powers which share her moral outlook and imitate her conduct. It is easy to imagine the unilateral disarmament of Germany, but the logic of this speech points also to the disarmament of Italy and Japan. The task confronting the Anglo-American policeman would call for a big stick and a long arm. This silence raises the question: who or what is our enemy? Is it Germany, our rival and competitor, or is it her philosophy of life? That she shares not merely with Italy and Japan, but with Franco's Spain and other dictatorial systems in the Balkans and Latin America. If we smile on these while we banish her, will she ever believe that she suffered for her sins under the sentence of even-handed justice? If we are to take on ourselves the functions of the Judge of all the Earth, it is arguable that we ought to lay the

lash on our own backs also. Through twenty years had we no share by omission or commission in the causation of this disaster? But I will not attempt to follow Lord Halifax further in his reflections on "justice and power."

The negative character of this sketch is an even graver matter. Lord Halifax was talking to the Pilgrims, but many Germans also were listening. The average German may have fought at first for domination: before the end he will have to fight for survival and a tolerable future. Every day and in every speech and broadcast, it should be our first concern to assure him that life, if he capitulates and throws over his Nazi masters, will still be worth living. Lord Halifax gave him no such assurance. He failed even to say that within our economic system we will make it easy for him to earn his bread. The only prospect held out to him was one of political impotence and submission, while we retain with military supremacy the ability to dictate. If that is all we have to say, we might as well close down our entire organisation for propaganda to the enemy. On this basis even the more radical of the German workers will reject every invitation to revolt.

Some harsh things have to be said. We cannot forget that Hitler has poisoned the mind of his nation. Assuredly at the armistice the enemy must be disarmed. But when peace is finally concluded, are we really resolved to retain in our own Anglo-American hands the gigantic military machine created during this war? So long as armaments remain the possession of the empires, they will be used to back imperial interests. There is no escape from the use of arms for self-regarding ends, until we make military power a monopoly of the international Community. Not till we adopt that policy shall we solve the riddle of Germany. It is one thing to require her to obey an armed enemy and quite another to exact loyalty to an international force, which will also protect her. To such a force, when by respect for "individual liberty" she had qualified for membership of the Community, she would of course send her contingent. Unilateral disarmament is a mistaken policy, not merely because it rejects the only sound principle of any international community—equality, of rights. It is to be deplored because it would compel us and our children to mount guard for ever over a numerous and formidable people. Nor could we disarm Germany effectively, unless we broke her industrial power. That, in a reformed Germany, would be treason to civilisation. If we are to aim at "wealth and culture" for mankind, our purpose should be to enlist the co-operation of this great and talented nation.

H. N. BRAILSFORD

A LONDON DIARY

THE British press and wireless have now for the first time splashed estimates of the numbers of civilians killed by British bombers in Germany. What is the reason for this complete change of policy? Is it the result of a cool calculation of the military advantages of bombing civilians, or is it a concession to an ill-informed public clamour? The arguments against civilian bombing should be familiar. Since last September the Germans have spent millions of tons of bombs and wasted the lives of large numbers of trained pilots in indiscriminate bombing. The effects have unquestionably been to unite the British people in a far tougher determination to resist. The latest example comes from the Glasgow area, where the public is only now learning that the loss of life and destruction to working-class homes was as bad as it has been anywhere in Britain. All reports agree that the psychological results have been to bring Glasgow into the war in a far more real sense than before—and the "Red Clyde" was in this respect the least certain area in the British Isles. A German pilot, giving a German propaganda talk on the wireless the other day, described himself over the Clyde looking down into the moonlit water and seeing the ships and dockyards which presented, he remarked, a most tempting target. "But," he added, "I had other orders." What the other orders were we can guess from the death roll. British policy until now has been to bomb the ships and docks, and to keep as far as possible to military objectives. The evidence suggests that the results upon German production have been highly satisfactory. I have said nothing so far about the moral and propagandist questions involved. Are we not losing an important asset if we tell the world that when we are strong enough we are as willing as the Germans to kill civilians, and is there any reason to believe that civilian bombing, which toughens British morale, will break the German spirit? I know there are people who believe there is something so essentially different in the British and German mentality, that whereas danger makes us brave it will induce the German people to sit down and howl. I do not think the experience of the last war confirms this. The only argument I can see in favour of civilian bombing in Germany is that, whereas British people were expecting bombing to be far worse than it has been, the Germans were promised by Göring complete protection in the air. I agree there is propagandist value in disabusing them of this illusion; but that I should say can be done effectively by cutting off rail communications, burning oil, destroying power houses, bridges and harbours. However, the point of my inquiry is whether there has really been a change in bombing policy based on any calculation of military advantage, or whether the new policy is an endeavour to satisfy an ignorant popular outcry. If it is the latter, I suggest that the proper reply is carefully to educate the public in the realities; to explain the pros and cons of the matter, and to help people to keep their heads by explaining that civilian bombing is a waste of pilots, planes and bombs.

* * *

Oddly enough, world events are not timed to suit the convenience of weekly journals. Nothing, in our view, ought ever to happen on Thursdays. And last week several things happened on Thursday. The Jugoslavs made a *coup d'état* and Mr. Churchill made two different speeches. The Prime Minister's great news about the revolt that got rid of the Jugoslav Quislings was actually given out while the Weeklies were going to press, and all of them, with the exception of this one, appeared on Friday morning with unrelieved pictures of the Jugoslavs' surrender to Germany and discussions of the strategic consequences of German "hospital trains" and the rest proceeding through the Vardar Pass into Greece. On this journal we did not hear in time to rewrite the whole story, but we were in time to recall the front page without losing the trains which distribute the paper in the country. I should explain for those who are not acquainted with the mechanics of printing that the plates are made in pairs, so that the front page goes with the back page and the second with the last but one. It seemed too wretched, when we had a really good piece of news, to appear with the "surrender of Belgrade" on the front page; so we went to press with Thursday's news on page 1 followed inconsequently on page 2 with Wednesday's account of the capitulation.

* * *

The suddenness of this revolution seems to have caused confusion in some other quarters, for Mr. Churchill told his Conservative audience that Jugoslavia had found its soul and that "a revolution has taken place in Belgrade," and also that he was sometimes tempted to utter a rejoinder to those—a small but assertive group—who talked lightly of some sort of revolution at the end of the war. A better illustration than Jugoslavia's of the necessity for revolution in Europe as a means of winning the war one could scarcely hope to find.

* * *

What a game it is—squash any constructive suggestion as threatening to national unity and so preserve the world safe for Conservatism! Those who expose inefficiency are dismissed as grumblers and disappointed office-holders, while those who are in a position to corroborate their criticisms cannot do so because they are absorbed in Government posts. If you wish for the perfect example of criticism which cannot be taken for "defeatism" or grousing, read *My Dear Churchill* (Gollancz, 2*s.* 6*d.*). In these dozen letters "Populus" speaks with charm and authority; he gives excellent "tutorials" on war economics to our leaders, who, one suspects, will often not understand the elementary principles he lays down, even if they can be induced to read them. In time—nine months is the usual gestation period—they may listen. I have not seen any book which in so few words analyses the position so clearly and which imparts its lesson so incisively, yet with real understanding and knowledge of administration problems.

* * *

A really useful conference was held last week-end when the Town and County Planners came together at Oxford to consider the realities of the blitz-destruction and the encouraging possibilities of imaginative reconstruction. It embraced many experts with divergent interests but, now converging views. About one thing there appeared to be no conflict—the need for Regional Authorities. Dr. Dudley Stamp has produced, through the Land Utilisation Survey, a new "Domesday Book" in terms of the soil, carefully mapped, and he showed how the anarchic development of the towns and conurbations was eating into the highest grade agricultural soil, of which there is only three per cent. in England. He wanted to oust Dr. Robson's proposed New Towns from the arable lands. But surely as was agreed and discussed a proper nutrition economy will demand that the "back-

yard products "—milk, fruit, eggs and green vegetables which are our protective foods and the essential virtue of which is freshness—shall be at the backdoor of the towns, their Green Belts. Again, in discussing the wide principles of planning, the arguments between cottage-and-garden and flat development is a bit unnecessary since the choice will be conditioned by choice, needs and the nature of our planning. Two blitz-town planners, Mr. D. E. E. Gibson of Coventry and Mr. H. J. Manzoni of Birmingham, brought the conference to grips with the immediate realities, hingeing largely on the ownership of the land and the need for a Master Plan for the whole country or a whole region or both. Sir Ernest Simon, after discussing pooling of private interest in sites and other devices, came down flatly for nationalisation as the only solution.

* * *

I am glad to see that Lady Violet Bonham-Carter and Mr. Mann of the *Yorkshire Post*, both of them determined and independent people, have been appointed to the Board of the B.B.C. Dr. Mallon and Sir Ian Fraser have been reappointed. The members responsible for the ban are still with us. As if to balance the good appointments, Mr. Lindsay Wellington is leaving his post as Director of the Broadcasting division in the Ministry of Information. Called there from the B.B.C. by Sir John Reith, he has been more successful, for he is a man of outstanding good sense, possessing the steeliest of fists in the most velvety of gloves. I hope that he will now be placed in a key position in the B.B.C. He certainly is needed there. The qualifications of Lord Davidson, who has been appointed Controller of Production in the Ministry of Information, are more mysterious. To have been Lord Baldwin's mentor is not what a Registry office would call "a good reference." But many changes at the Ministry of Information have been so frequent that a new batch of important appointments now pass with little remark. "Oh, that's just Minnie swopping horses in shallow water as usual," we say and pass on.

* * *

I have just seen a copy of *The Freedom We Defend*, a piece of propaganda issued by the Ministry of Information. It is a panegyric of British institutions, of excellent format with apt and telling illustrations bearing on freedom of speech, the written word, justice, government, worship, learning, occupation, association and leisure. It would perhaps have been better if the Ministry had confined itself to pictures since some of the text will not bear examination. Thus under Freedom of Occupation one reads "Every citizen in the Commonwealth is now at liberty, so far as the State is concerned, to choose the nature and place of his work, and to forsake conditions, which are not congenial or advantageous, for others which offer him greater comfort, better wages or swifter advancement. The State no longer hinders but helps him in his choice." Now this is a blatant untruth as far as coloured people are concerned. I say nothing of the situation in South Africa, since the Home Government can plead that its jurisdiction does not run there. But the Director of Recruitment of the Civil Service is now inviting applications for appointments to the Colonial Administrative Service and it is stipulated that candidates must be of European descent. This means that a West Indian, even if he holds a first-class honours degree of an English university, is disqualified from becoming an official administrator in his own island. In the old Roman Empire an ex-slave could rise to the highest administrative office: in the present French Empire a coloured man can become a Governor. The Ministry of Information has distorted the truth on this point and opens us to the charge that an item on Freedom of Hypocrisy has unaccountably been omitted from its panegyric.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of this column goes this week to L. Read.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Men come to Cambridge to work. What spare time they have should be spent on the O.T.C. or on games, and not in frittering away their time playing at politics.

Britain is fighting a war. Any organisation such as yours cannot but prejudice the interest shown by undergraduates by canalising their enthusiasm into other matters, e.g., the Sino-Japanese war, in which they have no concern. —Letter to *Cambridge China Bulletin*.

The Protestant Church must view with intense relief the averting of the Italian menace to Egypt and Palestine, since it was increasingly clear that the Vatican had its own designs on Palestine, and that the prospect of Zion Hill passing under the papal sceptre was a prize for which the Roman See would stake much.—*Monthly Record of the Free Church of Scotland*.

Golfers, already assisting the war effort, are to help still further by playing on courses that have been shortened by ploughing.—*News Chronicle*.

But the author's long tirade about the old school tie, quite apart from its being too long, is surely unnecessary? The social revolution is not only a certainty, but is already a thing of the past.—Book review in *Observer*.

His Majesty's Motor Torpedo Boats, fifty mile an hour speedboats, armed with eight Lewis guns and two torpedo tubes, are the Mosquitos of the Royal Navy. The first eighteen of one class of these deadly craft were numbered 1 to 19. No Number Thirteen! It's just a detail, but a certain pointer to the care for detail that gives the Royal Navy its supremacy on the seas.—Trade Advt. in *Times*.

SAVED

The Order in Council permitting the Sunday opening of theatres rejected by the House of Commons, April 1st.

FAREWELL to Sunday mumming!
Good Christians now may say
No pastimes unbecoming
Profane the Sabbath Day.
This godless innovation
Exposed in Parliament
The watchdogs of the nation
Most righteously prevent.

The Bishops and the brewers
Are fervently agreed
That only evildoers
Would prompt this impious deed;
While Sunday entertainers note
With spiritual pain,
That showmen would a vice promote
From sordid greed of gain.

Though Sunday stage-plays needs must be
A soul-destroying snare,
The same heard on the B.B.C.
Provoke to heartfelt prayer,
While Sabbath dramas on the screen
Exude no moral blight
In pious meditation seen
By dim religious light.

Before the Puritans, alas,
Their love of Sunday plays
Brought Britons to a dreadful pass
In good Queen Bess's days,
Till saved by Barebones and his set,
They prayed all Sunday through—
And Barebones is not buried yet,
So Sunday plays, adieu!

SAGITTARIUS

THE ECLIPSE OF THE HIGHBROW

HIGHBROWS are selfish, undisciplined and cowardly; they produce literature, painting and music that are trivial and mystificatory; consequently the public interest in poetry and painting has for the last twenty years been declining. This was the thesis of a leading article in the *Times*, entitled *The Eclipse of the Highbrow*—an article revealing the fervent Philistinism that has now for a century been an entemic disease in this country. There is a great deal of truth in these contentions. A number of Highbrows from Alcibiades to Rimbaud have, as Critic said last week, lacked the stoic virtues. Indeed, the epithets showered upon the Highbrow in the *Times*, "impatient, intolerant, self-indulgent and touchy," apply most exactly to Beethoven. It is true also that many contemporary writers and painters have produced works that were meaningless, and the mud thrown at Miss Stein is designed to spatter Mr. Eliot. It is true that the best artists enjoy a relatively smaller public to-day than they did in the XVIIIth century: Pope and Reynolds were better sellers than Sickert and Yeats. But first I can see no evidence for supposing that intellectuals and artists are morally below the average. Secondly, to appreciate the sciences no less than the arts a far stricter training is now needed than two or even one hundred years ago. (Any intelligent, educated man could follow Darwin's arguments, but it needs long study to understand

those of contemporary biologists.) Thirdly, the public interest in contemporary painting and poetry, if judged by sales, has increased during the last twenty years.

The correspondence excited by the *Times* article has now canalised itself into an assertion that the average man is the ultimate authority upon art. Aristotle and Dr. Johnson have been dragged up like ancient cannon to defend this opinion, which the Director of the National Gallery had refuted, and which I believe to be obviously untrue. Presumably the "average man" is representative of the majority of the population. I would then ask his self-appointed champions three questions. Has the average man ever entered the National Gallery? Does he enjoy listening to Bach or Beethoven? Does he read Milton and Wordsworth? If not, how can he be "the ultimate authority upon art and literature?" This ultimate authority, I suggest, is not the average man, but the consensus of educated taste over a long period. Milton, Rembrandt, Mozart, have attained their rank not by the admiration of the average man (which at no period have they gained), but by the enthusiasm they have excited, in generation after generation, among those best qualified to judge. It is likely that the average man is potentially capable of distinguishing good art from bad. It is certain that at no period of history has he been given the education necessary for making such a distinction. More is being done to-day than ever before to educate him—the inhabitants of many English towns, for instance, are now for the first time being given the opportunity of seeing a good painting, and the results are highly gratifying. But by the light of nature you can no more be a judge of painting or poetry than a judge of horseflesh. Ask a cricketer if a man can estimate the value of a bowler, without having devoted many hours to the study of the game: ask a skilled artisan whether a casual labourer can appreciate the virtues of a machine tool: consider whether poetry and painting are simpler activities than bowling or machine tool making: and then discover how much time the average man has devoted to the study of the great poets or the Old Masters. If the man in the street is deprived of the delights given by fine art and literature, the injustices of our social system are largely responsible. But it is fair to add that the Public School and the University are not, as they should be, much more successful than the Elementary School, in enabling their products to enjoy the incomparable pleasures of poetry and painting.

All this seems obvious enough: and perhaps when Mr. Sampson writes to the *Times* about the average man, he means something quite different from what he says. Certainly Aristotle when he spoke of "the many" did not include the majority of his compatriots, who were slaves unable to read; and Dr. Johnson's ultimate authority was not the man in the street (whom he regarded as "an ignorant dog,") but "the common sense of readers"—a very different matter.

A careful consideration of the letters on this subject to the *Times* reveals, I suggest, the true nature of the controversy. It is the stale, never-ending war between the old and the young. Look at the ages of the correspondents: Dr. Ernest Barker is 66, Mr. Sampson is 67, so is Mr. Maurice Headlam, and Mr. J. A. Spender is 78. What they deplore is not really "Highbrow" work, but the work of the younger generation. (It is not unlikely that they once were enthusiasts for Browning, and perhaps even for Meredith, when these were attacked by the veterans.) When an elderly man impugns the courage and general moral character of his juniors, because he disapproves of the art they produce, the spectacle is not pretty. But neither is it unusual. In most of us taste crystallises early, and we regard the products of the younger generation with incomprehension and jealous dislike. Wordsworth, Constable and Beethoven were attacked in this way no less savagely than Eliot, Picasso and Stravinski. But for elderly scholars, retired civil servants and leader-writers in the *Times* to represent themselves as the champions of the average man is comical. It is even, though not of course consciously, hypocritical. Their education, their standards and their incomes are utterly different from those of the average man. And this is a fact that they would quickly enough recognise, if, like so many of the young Highbrows whom they insult, they were serving without a commission in the ranks of the Army, the Navy, or the Air Force.

RAYMOND MORTIMER.

THINKING OF FOOD

MOST of us have lately been changing our habits as eaters; and Lord Woolton says that we are all the better for this. The superfluity of carrots has turned us all into carrot-eaters, whether we used to like carrots or not; and, as a result, we have been cured of night-blindness, from which we never knew we suffered till the imposition of the black-out. The potato, against which we were once warned as starchy food, has now been discovered to be, even more than bread, the staff of life; and we eat it with a new relish. All those dull meats on which our cooks and our hostesses used to feed us, however much we longed to lead simple and health-preserving lives, have become rarer; and no more need we after a full meal feel that we have been converted into seed-beds of disease. Even if we lunch in restaurants, we can usually escape the roast joint by arriving late when the chief remaining dish is something called cream of tripe, which could do no one any harm. A doctrinaire may suggest that it is possible to refuse the joint even if it is still obtainable; but it needs strength of mind nowadays not to order the joint if it is on the menu. After all, most of us are creatures of habit, conservatives. We have been brought up in the foolish superstition that meat is an almost essential food, and, if we see on the menu the words: "Chops and Steaks, if Procurable," we cannot help ordering them through sheer *vis inertiae*. Fortunately, they are very often not procurable, and so we are saved from ourselves.

All this, I think, will enable the present generation to discover new pleasures of the table. We have too long taken it for granted that the diet to which people have grown accustomed in the last century or so is the only diet on which a man can keep body and soul together. This is all nonsense. Customs in eating and drinking change from age to age, though not so rapidly, as customs in dress. If Shakespeare returned to earth, he would probably feel as foreign at a modern dinner-table as we should feel if we were reborn into the time of Elizabeth and served with what was then thought a good dinner. I have no doubt that, if this happened to us, the meat—eaten without forks, was it not?—would disgust us and that the difference between the Elizabethan vegetable dishes and our own would appal us. Even slight differences from the food to which we are accustomed take the edge off our appetites. I could scarcely bear to eat the first dish of sweetbreads—a dish I had never seen till then—that was set before me when I came to England. Many English people, when abroad, are reluctant to eat goat; more still quail at snails; nearly all of them think that one of the worst things that could happen would be to find that they had been eating horse. I confess that I myself have this repugnance to eating horseflesh. I met a soldier recently who, having been a butcher in civil life, told me that there is one popular food in which the flesh of horses is used even in England. He said that he had an uncle in the old-horse trade who made a living by selling horses for the preparation of this food. He may have been only trying to make my hair stand on end, but I have carefully avoided that food ever since. Even so, I hold that my prejudice is unreasonable. About 30 per cent. of our prejudices are. I met a woman the other day who said that even in wartime she would not give her cat cat's-meat—which, I believe, is cooked horseflesh—because she did not like giving her cat anything that she would not eat herself. The sheep's heart that she tried to get from her butcher for the animal is apparently rationed. "Sheep's heart!" I thought to myself: "why I would as soon eat horseflesh." For against sheep's heart, brains, marrow and such things I have a prejudice as invincible as it is indefensible.

Other people have a similar antipathy to tripe and black puddings, as a result of which they go through life missing two of the finest dishes. Let the imagination become the prey of disgust, however, and Heaven knows what good food you may be avoiding next. The vegetarian is disgusted at the thought of eating any animal food—"corpses of animals," as one of them has called them. Described in that way, meat certainly does not sound attractive. But most of us have not these morbid thoughts as we sit down on Sunday to enjoy our weekly meat ration. The slice of meat we eat no more makes us think of the living steer than the bread we eat makes us think of the wheat-lands of Canada. It is simply conventional food that we eat, cheerfully and unimaginatively, because other people have been eating it ever since we can remember.

The meat-eater's attitude to the vegetarian, on the other hand, is as odd as the vegetarian's attitude to the meat eater. The meat-eater regards the vegetarian's diet, not with disgust, perhaps, but with a mixture of fear and derision. He imagines, in face of all the evidence, that if he became a vegetarian, he would soon be reduced to semi-starvation. His vegetarian friends may quote him long lists of centenarians, men of genius, and world-famous athletes who have flourished without the aid of meat, but the meat eater remains convinced that vegetables, fruit and nuts do not constitute a meal, but only a pleasant addition to a meal. In matters of food, as in most other matters, evidence counts for little in comparison with prejudice.

It is probable that human beings can live admirably on any kind of food that is not in itself poisonous. I myself sometimes wish that

I could eat without squeamishness any dish that had been eaten in any age or by any nation since the beginning of the world. Birds' nests, for example. Mr. Belloc has sung:

> Birds in their little nests agree
> With Chinamen, but not with me.

But is he certain? If Chinamen can digest birds' nests, sharks' fins, and other equally strange dishes, why not the rest of us? I for one should like, not to try them, but to have tried them. I should also like to have tried elephant steak, hedgehog, and octopus—all of them, I am sure, better than bouillabaisse and at least as good as that fried chicken which is said to be the Negro's dream of food in Paradise. Recently, while looking through the last volume of the *Deipnosophists* of Athenaeus in the Loeb Library, I found myself wishing that at some time in my life I had had a chance of trying peacock.

There is something repellent in the notion of eating so beautiful a bird, and if I were offered a dinner including a peacock, I should probably refuse it. But, in ancient times, when men were as wise as we are, they seem to have eaten it without scruple. And after all we ourselves do not shrink from eating that lovely bird, the pheasant. Perhaps, it was found from experience that pheasant was more digestible than peacock. Or it may be that as regards the peacock, the sense of beauty for once proved stronger even than the longings of appetite.

Possibly, if the human race had opened its eyes and had realised what a beautiful creature the pig is, we should sit down more reluctantly to our breakfast bacon. I myself never read about sucking pig as a dish without feeling that there is a stain of crime on it, for at that age a pig is loveliest of all.

Then there are pigs' trotters, which I have always longed to have eaten but have never longed to eat.

Let not our thoughts dwell, however, on the things we might have eaten in the past or if we had lived in some distant country. Let us rather think of the extraordinary things which we have never eaten but which we can, if we have the necessary courage and adventurousness, eat here and now. There are dishes described in Mr. Ambrose Heath's little book, *Kitchen Front Recipes and Hints* (Black, 2*s.* 6*d.*), which to most of us will be as strange as roasted peacock or ambrosia. There is Devilled Beetroot for example. I am ready to bet that not one in a thousand readers of this paper has ever tasted Devilled Beetroot. I should have thought it was all but impossible to put devil into beetroot; but here new vistas of pleasure are opened to the imaginative gourmet. If Horace had written about such a dish, we should all be envying the Romans of the time of Augustus for having eaten it. Then there are Radish Tops, which "taste like a cross between spinach and turnip-tops," with, I hope, a bias towards the spinach side. When you have eaten these, you can pickle the radishes as you pickle onions. There is, in fact, no limit to the possibilities of the new order in cookery. Who would have thought it possible a year or two ago to face such a dish as Marrow Flower Fritters? It is apparently a French dish, but in England the notion of picking the male flowers of the marrow and making fritters of them would have been laughed at till these revolutionary times. Having lunched on Marrow Flower Fritters, you can enjoy a new kind of tea on Beetroot Buns, which require scarcely any sugar in their preparation. If you do not like these, you can eat Eggless Cake, which must at least be better than the Genoa Cake of the tea-shops.

Then there are the dandelion and nettle dishes—dishes such as Nebuchadnezzar, King of Kings, never knew. Only prejudice keeps us from eating these. We have Mr. Heath's word for it that "a poached egg on a bed of dandelion or nettle *purée* covered with a cheese sauce is an almost perfect meal." I am sure that, if we approach these strange-sounding dishes in the spirit, not of martyrs, but of gourmets, we shall discover pleasures of the table hitherto undreamed of. Saddle of mutton is good, but it is not as good for you as potatoes and carrots. Let us, in the modern idiom, become potato-and-carrot-conscious, and we shall find ourselves at the gates of a new Paradise of appetite.

Y. Y.

COUNTRY NOTES

IT will be interesting to see what will happen to the gardens of England this summer, not the innumerable little gardens which can be managed single-handed with perhaps the help of "a man" (an old man, one supposes) for a couple of hours during the week, but the larger gardens where labour is a necessity if they are not to revert to weeds and wilderness. One remembers that during the last war the lawns were allowed to grow into hay and it seems likely that this will happen again on an even wider scale, for several reasons. For one thing the motor-mower has very generally replaced the old pony-drawn machine and few people will be able to spare the petrol from their car-ration. (It is true that you can, or could last year, obtain a special allowance for the purpose, but I do not know if this concession is still in force and in any case it was inadequate.) For another thing the ploughing up of millions of acres has resulted in hay being almost unobtainable, even at the fantastic price of nine or ten pounds a ton. It seems clear that next winter the shortage will be even greater. Silage, of course, is a valuable supplement and may be made from grass as well as from other green stuff such as peas, beans, etc.; many farmers, indeed, took to making silage for the first time last year and found that it proved useful as a substitute for meal, roots, and even for fodder. We are not a thrifty race, and it is all to the good that such economical methods should be forced upon us; one hopes that the lesson will not be forgotten when conditions return more or less to normal. But from the point of view of the private garden-owner the objection to making silage from his grass-cuttings is that it does involve a certain amount of labour, both in preparing the silo-pit and then in keeping up the supply by the usual regular mowing. Letting the grass grow is the only alternative. Lawns will look very rough until the end of June, but they will suffer no permanent harm, and the danger of the seeding grasses can be avoided by cutting at the right moment. The cutting may prove a difficulty: not every garden is so constructed as to admit the entrance of a machine, and to get even a moderate expanse of ground cut by scythe may be no easy matter. Then comes the question of what to do with the lawns after the hay has been cleared. Hope for a second crop or try to keep mowing and then make some silage? If labour and petrol can be provided, this would seem to be the most practical arrangement.

For the rest, I suppose that vegetables will be grown in beds and borders, in the blank patches usually reserved for annuals. Though nobody could prefer to see onions in the place of snapdragons, the frilly tops of carrots should not be too unsightly, and I can imagine that the scarlet spheres of the tomato at the foot of a sunny wall should be actually decorative. The globe artichoke, that much neglected and extremely useful vegetable, is almost as handsome in foliage-value as the acanthus; it might well find a permanent place among the herbaceous clumps in peace as well as war. But I fear it will be a long time before the English become educated to the proper use of vegetables. Optimistically trying to arrange for a surplus-produce stall in a neighbouring village, I was met with the objection that "If you can't get meat to eat them with, what's the use of having vegetables?"

Bishop Barnaby

The sudden warm days we enjoyed last week brought the hibernating lady-birds out of hiding. Stones and leaves were freckled with the little red beetles. One is pleased to see them, since one knows that their black larvae or "niggers" will rapidly set to work devouring the green-fly on the roses and in the hop-gardens. Lady-birds love hop-gardens, and perhaps that is why we get such a number of lady-birds here, surrounded as we are by the hops of Kent. I doubt if the most energetic brood of "niggers" could clear an entire garden in all its acres, but one does feel grateful to them for all the work they will do among the smaller acreage of the roses. Never was more unwise advice given by nursery rhyme than in the one which runs:

> *"Lady-bird, lady-bird, fly away home,*
> *Your house is on fire and your children will burn."*

Far from sending her home in a scurry, we ought to encourage her to stay with us and allow her children (who are not burning at all) to eat up our pests.

This rhyme, like most popular rhymes, has its origin in truth. The idea of the fire burning refers to the fiery colour of the lady-bird herself. In fact, I have sometimes wondered if the reference to Bishop Barnaby should not be written as Bishop Burnaby. "Burn-a-by, baby, on the tree top." More plausibly, the name Barnaby is explained by interpreting it as bairn-bye, the bairn insect, the favourite of the child. The small child does indeed take kindly to the bright beetle, tries to pop it with its finger as one might explode a fuschia bud in English gardens or a bug in Eastern countries, and there the child is right, for lady-bird is probably no more than a corruption of bug. But bug is supposed to be an ugly word in English with ugly associations, and bird is supposed to be a pretty word with pretty associations. Our national gift for the evasion of unpleasant truths is once more made manifest.

Cage-Birds

The note I wrote recently in these columns about the difficulty of finding suitable food for birds in cages and aviaries, especially budgerigars, has brought me a number of suggestions which I pass on in the hope that they may be helpful to others in the same plight. It has brought me more than suggestions, it has brought also some parcels of food for which I am deeply grateful. One of these, a mixture of linseed, medium oatmeal, and charlock, was much liked; the kind sender of this packet observes that charlock is plentiful at threshing-time in her part of the country, Gloucestershire. Other packets contained food already recognised as suitable for budgerigars, such as millet, sunflower, and canary seed, so do not call for special comment except a reaffirmation of gratitude. One correspondent, however, sent me a sample tin of a by-product made by his own firm, a well-known firm of biscuit-makers, and this I think may prove a real help in shortage, especially as he remarks that it is not easy to dispose of and therefore I suppose that one might buy it in quantities with a free conscience. The birds cleared every grain of it as soon as I had offered it to them, although I had prudently supplied them with other choices. Another correspondent remarks that no two budgerigars are alike in what they will eat apart from seed, but that if one of them can be induced to take to an unfamiliar food such as breadcrumbs and grasses, others will probably follow his example and eat "what they had previously considered part of the scenery." She suggests also that the sweepings of mangers are worth saving, as a quantity of seed, otherwise useless, will be found to have fallen from the hay.

V. SACKVILLE-WEST

BEETHOVEN AND THE FUTURE

II

GENIUS of so ponderous and brooding a quality must have its drawbacks, of which unrelenting seriousness is the most obvious. Others lurk in Beethoven's method of composition. It must not be forgotten that he was famous in his day for improvisation at the piano, and it seems probable that the seeds of his works were born in some such manner and that the composer's procedure (as shown in his notebooks) was to formalise this extempore material, gradually hammering his themes into usable shape and nearly always compressing them in the process. All this *Bearbeitung* resulted in a certain lack of spontaneity—of "vocality"—which I think places him below Bach, Mozart, and Schubert on the purely melodic plane. With Beethoven, as with much lesser artists like Mérimée, excessive simplicity becomes obviousness, as in the Violin Concerto or the Andante of the Fifth Symphony. Mr. Dickinson suggests that Beethoven "did not aspire to the fascinating rhetoric of artfully changing octave and rhythmic detail which Bach had anticipated and Chopin was to perfect." If this is so—and I think the point is both true and important—the reason is perhaps partly to be sought in Beethoven's growing deafness, which may have made for the wood-cut themes and the violent chiaroscuro of his style, but chiefly in the fact that his spirit dealt in an essentially different *kind* of poetry from that which was natural to composers like Mozart and Chopin. His search for truth was directed to different ends from theirs. So that I can see no sense in Mr. Dickinson's remark that Mozart's music is addressed to "a level of aural understanding which has since been superseded." This is robbing Peter to pay Paul, and it only confuses the entire issue to imply—as that sentence does—that, say, the Eighth Symphony has rendered Mozart's in G minor (K 550) out of date. The world will never be so rich in masterpieces that it can afford to regard Mozart as "superseded."

If art is to survive and develop (the two are synonymous), modern man must learn to live in more than one emotional climate. With Beethoven music entered on its most tremendous phase of development, one which now (*pace* Mr. Dickinson) seems to be drawing to a close—at all events from the point of view of form. The modern symphony, the tone-poem, the rhetorical fantasia, Wagnerian opera, are all results of following up suggestions contained in Beethoven's work, just as his harmonic experiments led to conventional "romantic" harmony as typified by Mendelssohn. Again, though Bach is the putative, Beethoven is the real father of Schönberg and of all those who have recently engaged in the foolish attempt to rid music of its sensuous elements—as if that were desirable! These composers may talk about "tone-rows" till all's blue, but one notices that directly "expression" becomes absolutely essential to them—as, for instance, in the F minor interlude after the murder in Berg's *Wozzeck*—they revert bare-facedly to a romantic polyphony based on pedal-points, chromatic imitation, and other features all firmly clamped round a tonal centre.

The cause of Atonalism may be considered lost; on the other hand, I see no reason to expect a rapid change in the near future from the rather deliquescent chromaticism which has become the homogeneous medium of all modern music—partly because dance-music which may be expected to remain on the whole the most popular genre, makes use of this harmonic system in its most degenerate Scriabinesque form, and is therefore bound to exert a normative influence on the general ear. Only when this chromatic influence is finally exhausted is a simpler diatonic system likely to return. But apart from the important question of harmony it is doubtful whether the new world, the rather horrifyingly arid outlines of which are already beginning to appear through the social disintegration set up (or accelerated) by the war, will have much use for the forms which music has evolved in the last hundred and twenty years, under the paramount influence of Beethoven. To see in the Finale of the Ninth Symphony the forerunner of the music of an egalitarian society seems to me excessively superficial. Music is the most ambiguous of the arts and it is safe to say that in no other medium would a man like Miaskovsky have got away with it as the mouthpiece of Communist Revolution, since he expresses himself in symphonies of a decadent, hysterically Tchaikovskian individualism far more esoteric than that of Rachmaninoff, who was deemed unworthy to represent the "new" Russia. Ridiculous misconceptions of this kind are often the best indications of the spirit of an age, and this one shows how far music may yet have to go in order to catch up with this century's headlong rush. True art will always take its own way, but it does not seem unduly arbitrary to expect the music of the future to comment more closely and continuously on everyday life than it has done up to the present. The immense, lonely symphony, whether on the Sibelius or on the Bruckner model, will be out of place, and sonata form, which Beethoven erected into a tyranny, must become a constitutional monarchy if it is to survive at all. Having created the fantasia as a by-product of first-movement form, the symphony proper might lapse back into the Suite from which it originally arose.

Forms, then, will become shorter, less expensive of time and means, but perhaps more various, abundant and rich in occasional appeal. We are, in fact, probably in process of return to the pre-Beethoven era when composers were expected to, and did, turn out immense quantities of music at the behest of a patron; but in this case the patron will be, not an aristocrat, but the public. No considerable composer before Beethoven would have thought two hundred and fifty-six works enough for a lifetime; led by his example few composers have since produced more than half that number. The youngest English school, however, is showing a tendency to abundance and a desire to be continually on the spot which relates them to Haydn and his happy ability to let his genius look after itself.

There are other finger-posts about. The film, with its scrappy, rhetorical outbursts, may result in a general telescoping of symphonic thought into concise fantasias of an aphoristic, sentimental or ironic persuasion, orchestrated for small ensembles. The piano may become popular again for its *cantabile* rather than for its percussive qualities. Opera will probably be far too expensive, as a result of which there might be a revival of the madrigal, as well as of long strophic ballads, telling a comic or pathetic story, to words by Auden and Betjeman and Plomer. The effect of wireless on music in the long run remains difficult to gauge; but I should not be surprised if the all-overish texture which it is apt to produce (especially on commercial sets) may end by discouraging elaborate or subtle orchestration; which would be yet another step away from Beethoven.

There is no point in bemoaning these perhaps at first sight unattractive probabilities. The history of music in the last twenty years has not been so very brilliant after all: what a number of false starts, of *culs-de-sacs*, of flashes in the pan, of misguided eccentricities, of outworn conventions obstinately persisted in! The composers of the future will not have been living in jealousy guarded individual isolation, cultivating their feelings; they will have been serving with the Forces and have acquired a thorough knowledge of all sorts of people. This is bound to affect their music—possibly in the directions I have mentioned. Of course there will also, one hopes, be exceptions—men whom ill-health or other extraordinary circumstances have kept apart from the unified stream of contemporary life; and these will be the Chopins and Brahmses of the future. And even the others will surely have their unsociable period when, suddenly reawakened by some chance incident to the immensities and immutabilities that underpin all existence, or even to the essential loneliness of man's condition, they will produce some counterpart of Beethoven's Cello Sonata in C, op. 102, or of Busoni's Sonatina Secunda.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"The Matthew Passion," at the Queen's Hall.

Dr. Reginald Jacques and the Bach Choir were loyal to tradition and to the pietist spirit of the Lutheran Church of the eighteenth century in taking the St. Matthew Passion quietly, when they rendered it in its entirety at the Queen's Hall on Saturday. It is pensive, subjective music to be sung with folded hands and downcast eyes. They took their dramatic chances, none the less, when they impersonated the Jewish mob. Two achievements stood out among the work of the soloists, all of whom were adequate. Mr. Ambrose Gauntlett played the glorious obligato given to the viola da gamba with a creative sense of rhythm, and Mr. Eric Greene sang his narrative as the evangelist with equal intelligence and vocal discipline.

"Mr. and Mrs. Smith," at the New Gallery.

"Flight Command," at the Empire.

This is one you may have heard before. Mr. and Mrs. Smith of New York, who have been married for two years, are the sort who quarrel, and after a terrible quarrel lasting for days they find they have never been really married, and the husband is content with things as they are. But the wife wants marriage or nothing and asserts an (almost) virgin independence. Then she decides to marry someone else, but by now the husband wants to marry her. Each stages scenes to make the other jealous, and this gives Robert Montgomery and Carole Lombard—the couple concerned—a chance to act spite and passion very prettily. The interloper, of course, an obvious non-starter, fades away in time for the happy ending. When did one last see this Plot No. 1 in the Hollywood repertoire? Oh, in *Third Finger, Left Hand*, a few weeks ago, and before that in *Hired Wife*. For some reason Hitchcock, who has made his line in another country, had to spread himself on this. Needless to say, it is amusing, with some good laughs elaborately built up and a tempo slightly slower than the American; and now and then the photography has a rich background recognisable as Hitchcock's. But there have been other *Mr. and Mrs. Smiths* as good and better.

Flight Command is a juvenile drama about an American squadron who call themselves "The Hell-cats." Robert Taylor is the new boy from Pensicola who falls in love with the skipper's wife: that is one of the things a Hell-cat doesn't do. It takes him a little time to learn. Some excellent photography of the squadron on manœuvres makes up for the inanity of the script.

"No Time for Comedy," at the Haymarket.

By an odd coincidence, the play and the film of *No Time for Comedy* reach London within a week of one another. In both forms it makes for easy, if not brilliant entertainment. If one happens to have seen the film first the play may appear even thinner than it is. The situation which on the screen occupies only the last half-hour or so is strung out on the stage to the length of three acts. On the whole, though rather lacking in conviction, the film wins by better acting, more speed and the greater liveliness of American accents. The best of the performance at the Haymarket was Mr. Rex Harrison as the smart playwright who is seduced into writing serious drama by an "intellectual Lorelei" (Miss Lilli Palmer). He gives us irresistibly a nervy charmer, caught between listless bingeing and the dawn of a new idea. These changes of temper and groping moods are more convincing than the clash of situation: the wife (Diana Wynyard), stands up for light comedy and true love, and the Lorelei tries thrillingly to discover genius where there is none. The lining-up of forces (with the help of the Lorelei's husband, and a coloured maid who acts as chorus) is neatly if conventionally funny. There is nothing in the film quite so tedious as the "serious drama" discussed at length in Act II; but on the other hand, the play has the advantage of an airier ending. Mr. Harrison hanging on the end of a telephone looking for the words to dismiss his Lorelei is delicious.

THE COMING WEEK

FRIDAY, April 4th—
- N. B. L. Pevsner: "Norman Cathedrals 1066–1200," Birkbeck College, 5.

SATURDAY, April 5th—
- Dr. S. F. Osiakovski: "Culture and Art in the U.S.S.R.," 9 Fitzroy Square, 2.30. "The Family Reunion," by T. S. Eliot, Maddermarket, Norwich. Till April 9th.

SUNDAY, April 6th—
- K. B. Smellie: "Social Philosophy—Liberty," 17 Manchester Street, W.1, 11.
- Prof. G. W. Keeton: "The Indian Problem," Conway Hall, 11.
- Opening of Camp Art in Canada Exhibition, Free German League of Culture, 36 Upper Park Road, N.W.3, 11.30.
- R. S. W. Pollard: "Freedom in Wartime," 153 Finchley Road, 5.30.
- The Choir of Holy Trinity Church, St. Marylebone, will sing works by Vaughan Williams, Pergolesi and Holst at 6. Also on Good Friday at 6.

MONDAY, April 7th—
- Books and Freedom Exhibition, Art Gallery, Leeds. Till April 27th.
- Fabian International Affairs Group Snack Lunch. A. Geiringer: "Jugoslavia," 12 Gt. Newport Street, W.C.2, 1.
- Le Play Society Vacation Courses at Exeter and in the Cotswolds. Particulars from Miss Tatton, Latchets, East Dean, Eastbourne.

TUESDAY, April 8th—
- Mrs. E. M. Lowe: "Local Government and the Social Services," Morley College, 6.30.

THURSDAY, April 10th—
- A. W. Stonier: "Trends in Modern English Economics," 36 Upper Park Road, 5.30.
- Song Recital by Elisabeth Abercrombie and Catherine Lawson, St. George's Church, Bloomsbury, 6.

Correspondence

FOR A GRADUAL ELECTION

SIR,—Three years' wait for a General Election after the war seems to the plain man too long. Sir Archibald Sinclair's hint that the delay might just as well be three years as three weeks or three months made many people jump in their skins. With the extreme idea that we should have an early election after the war no person with a memory can have any sympathy. The "Khaki" election in the December after the Armistice was an almost unmixed evil. Men got into Parliament on promises which a moment's thought would have shown to be ridiculous. They were exposed, but in vain. It was the first big stepping-stone to the present war. But if the present Parliament should be continued for three years after the war it would be a Parliament of "old men." It would exist not only in different conditions from those in which it was elected, but in a nation which by then will have gone through a complete political and social change.

The only answer the politicians have to this dilemma is compromise, say one and a half years. What other answer can be made? This, that Parliament should be re-elected on a new, but democratic system. In three years (to take that arbitrary figure) Parliament could be re-elected to make it represent the new electorate in the new world. No principle would be sacrificed, because it would be done by an extension of the method employed at every by-election when a seat falls vacant.

The main argument for some such scheme is that there will be an overwhelming feeling that Parliament should have new blood, fresh ideas and younger men and women, injected into it. If the new post-war ideas cannot find some expression, it will be both a wrong and a dangerous situation. But we know from hard experience that a sudden post-war election will not represent those ideas, but will betray them, because a General Election would be fought not on the future, but on the past of "the men who won the war."

A gradual process of re-election of Parliament would have these advantages.

It would avoid the swing of the pendulum by which the flowing tide carries a lot of unthinking people to the side that looks like winning.

We should escape a violent change in the policy of the Government and also in administration.

There would be less room for that bargaining about seats inside parties and between parties, of which there is far too much.

The argument used with individuals that they should not vote according to their convictions for fear of throwing out the Government would lose all meaning.

The upset to trade of a General Election would be avoided.

Against this proposal, it could be argued that:—

If Mr. Churchill remained in power his prestige would re-elect any candidate over whom he cared to throw his mantle.

Political contests would be continually in the mind of the public.

Members elected last would have a very short time before they would be exposed to the risk of a General Election.

We should not have that clean-cut decision which seems to make political life healthy and vigorous.

It would delay the prospects of applying Proportional Representation.

If the advantages were considered to outweigh the disadvantages a method could easily be worked out. One way would be this. The House of Commons has some 600 members, dividing them up over the arbitrary period of three years we should have about four for each week.

The country could be divided into four, roughly Scotland, Wales, North England and South England. In those areas the order of election could be balloted for. In any event the preparation of a register would take at least six months, but it would need that period for evacuees and people moved to new work to settle where they were going to live. The National Registration cards might be useful in simplifying procedure. We have changed our methods of election before, when the system of voting on one day was substituted for the previous long-drawn out method. A temporary system of the kind proposed would be unusual, but it is designed to meet a period that will be unusual to a degree. The main tendency of Government and politics would go on, but a gradual change, if the country wanted a change, could be carried out.

WILSON MIDGLEY

HIGHBROWS

SIR,—Critic last week commented on the *Times* article on "The Eclipse of the Highbrow." Mr. George Sampson in a letter to the *Times* now declares that the average man is the ultimate authority on artistic merit. Hence this song:

I am just an average fellow
And though I much prefer *Othello*
I am always forced to go and see Tom Mix.
I find Poussin's pictures saner
Than those of La Marlene
But somehow I am nightly at the flicks.
I love Bach upon the 'cello
For I'm just an average fellow
Whom Sandy at the organ can't amuse.
So pity my sad plight
Listening every bloody night
Not to Berg or Bloch or Bartok but to blues.
I prefer a bluebell's beauty
To any naked cutie
(It's an *average* man that's speaking in these rhymes).
I like photographs of churches,
Why is it that I purchase
That disgusting *Daily Mirror*, not the *Times*?

AVERAGE MAN

TRUTH IN WAR

SIR,—Mr. Scott Bayliss in his rather lofty letter on the subject of *Black Record* says "Surely we should by now have learned that the first war casualty is Truth." *Au contraire*. Of the current war it may be said that the one decent thing about it is that its

outbreak rescued Truth from extinction, the first two casualties being the Fascist Lie and the Nazi Myth. In September, 1939, it was as though a window had been broken and the first breath of fresh air for years let into the foul Big House of Europe which the obscene hoaxes and poltroon pretences of Appeasement had left all that time unventilated. Truth and Reality came tardily into their own and overnight stormed and took even that Citadel of Evasion Printing House Square. Truth became freeman not only of the press but also of screen, stage and microphone. Herr Hitler became plain Hitler and a White Paper on the infamies of the Concentration Camps sealed the conversion of the British Ruling Class to the view that the Nazis were not the right people to go tiger-shooting with. So the good work goes on and the whitewash comes off. May the process not stop with *Black Record.*

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DIAGHILEV

SIR,—Mr. Cyril Connolly's criticism of the *Life of Diaghilev* by Serge Lifar interested me profoundly. I only wish that it had been longer, and with more quotations. No woman can be said to have known Diaghilev intimately, and he even quarrelled with all his men friends. It is therefore difficult for anyone to write upon this curious product of Russian genius. But fair and friendly as Mr. Cyril Connolly's criticism is of Lifar's book, I do not think he is correct when he writes "what remains of Diaghilev?" As well as any woman could know him I did, and his very name awakens in me an orchestration of memories. He created what will never be forgotten—a new movement in Art, at any rate a new movement in what was an unknown form of Art in this country: the Russian Ballet.

As a man, I never cared much about him, but I had supper very often with him. I knew Nijinsky—undoubtedly the greatest male dancer who ever lived. He came to tea with me in my house in Cavendish Square. After shaking hands with me he wandered round the room fingering the edges of the panelling in my drawing-room. He did not sit down, but took his tea-cup in one hand and did not drink it. I watched his wanderings with curiosity as well as anxiety. As Mr. Cyril Connolly truly says in another passage of his criticism, "oriental remoteness" exactly describes my afternoon tea with Nijinsky. He did not answer me when I spoke to him, and appeared to be quite unconscious of my presence. He kissed my hands before he left and only uttered one sentence "Do you like Diaghilev?" When I said "Yes" he gave me a beautiful smile and banged the door.

I knew Pavlova, and went to visit her in her house in Hampstead. She was, in her own way, probably the greatest of all female dancers. But she was selfish, and resented the applause which her partner, Mordkin, received when he gave a solo performance. But I knew a still greater woman than Pavlova, and I am proud to say that she is a friend of mine. Karsavina has what few of the others whom I know had in the Russian Ballet: not only the grace of a great dancer, but a beautiful character. She was jealous of nobody; on the contrary she encouraged Diaghilev's best pupils and was adored by every member of the Russian Ballet.

I am only speaking for myself when I say that I have more pleasure in seeing these great Russian dancers than in anything put upon the stage when I was young. MARGOT OXFORD

FOOD EXPENDITURE

SIR,—Following on your recent remarks on the expenditure of middle-class households on food, I have taken the trouble of working out the average weekly expenditure for my family (husband, wife and child aged three) based on detailed accounts which I have been keeping since we set up home in January, 1936.

The following table gives the average weekly expenditure for each year since 1938, the 1941 figure being for the first quarter:

Items	1938 £ s. d.	1939 £ s. d.	1940 £ s. d.	1941 £ s. d.
Meat	4 4	5 1½	5 10	5 5½
Fish	1 2	1 4	1 10	2 0
Milk and Eggs	4 7	5 6½	5 8½	5 9
Groceries	9 8	12 0	12 8½	16 5
Bread	1 9	2 1	2 7½	2 11
Vegetables and Fruit	6 9	8 4	7 5½	5 1
Totals	£1 8 3	£1 14 5	£1 16 2	£1 17 7½

These figures tell a rather different story to that of your "bourgeois" correspondent who said she was spending 5s. to 10s. per head per week less on food. The difference is no doubt due to the difference in income. My husband's average income for the above period was £380, whilst a family which could afford to cut at the rate of 10s. per head must have been living at a much higher rate since our *total* expenditure on food averaged about 14s. per head, counting the child as a half.

To complete this record it would be necessary to analyse the quantities of foodstuffs purchased, but this would take us beyond our present argument. The figures, on the whole, tend to show little difference, but we are, of course, getting considerably less for the slight increase in outlay.

MIDDLE-CLASS HOUSEWIFE

SIR,—I am also one of the middle class and I have had to housekeep for myself, my family and for various camps, at one time and another. For many years I lived in rooms and catered for myself, and recently I have had to do the same again. Owing to evacuation expenses and a reduced salary, I had to live very carefully and it was also important that I should keep fit. I found that I could not manage under 15s. per week on food (formerly I reckoned about 10s. to 12s.). I had a room in the house of a friendly working-class widow with two children, and as I shared her kitchen and larder, I had good opportunities for comparing our expenditure. She used more tinned foods than I did, and I was more skilful and conscientious about using up oddments, but, taking it all round, I shouldn't think there was much to choose between our food expenditure. The most striking rise in cost is probably indirect—my coal had gone up from about 2s. 4d. to 4s. per cwt. and gas and electricity in proportion. Shopping time (which in my case as well as in that of my hard-working landlady was also money) was also doubled or trebled, if one was to get cheapish but adequate substitutes to make up a balanced diet.

I agree with your correspondent of last week that in the case of middle-class households in reasonably comfortable circumstances there was a margin for reduction, but for those who had to live carefully before the war, the cost certainly has risen.

"M.A., B.Sc."

RATION RACKETEERS

SIR,—With the existing set-up of the administration of our food supply the sort of racketeering described in such interesting detail by your lorry driver correspondent, W. J. N., is unavoidable. Your suggestion of an investigation is useful. But is it enough?

These wholesalers and merchant adventurers are merely acting in self defence and, incidentally, apeing their betters, if somewhat crudely. It is the express policy of the Government to disturb existing distributive arrangements as little as possible. If then, in conditions of increasingly short supply, the Government imposes price regulations, evasion is inevitable. To compensate for lower sales, profit margins, by legal or illegal means, will be widened.

There is no evidence that the food trusts are suffering any diminution of profits as a result of shortages; quite the contrary. But having their representatives in commanding positions in the controls they are able to widen their margins legally.

The problem must be tackled right at the top. The exclusion of popular or consumer influence from food policy and administration can be tolerated no longer. Before he joined the Government, Mr. Herbert Morrison had sound views on public administration. In *Picture Post* of 3rd February, 1940, he wrote:

> It is an axiom of good public administration that men in public authority should not be judges on matters where their private interests are or may be concerned. This sound principle . . . has been broken wholesale by the Government, who have appointed as controllers or to other official positions men who have private interests in the matters with which they deal on behalf of the State.

The interested controllers are still there and others have been added.

The way to deal with the jackals is to tackle the lions who set the pace. As a start a National Food Council composed of consumers, trade unionists and co-operators would work wonders in clearing up Lord Woolton's department, which badly needs a breath of democracy. FRED HARLEY

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Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

AMBASSADOR DODD'S DIARY (Gollancz, 12s. 6d.) is an unembellished record of diplomatic Germany from June, 1933 to December, 1937. We learn the atmosphere of high diplomacy in Nazi Germany from the honest and intelligent representative of the one great country which had not immediately to fear war; we read his conversations with the Nazi leaders, with fellow ambassadors in Berlin, with international journalists, visiting diplomats, American business men who sometimes advocate Fascism for the United States, with persecuted Jews, with official and unofficial ambassadors from Britain, with those who hoped to appease Germany, those who saw only disaster ahead, those who admired the Nazi regime and those who came to feel, as Ambassador Dodd himself reluctantly came to feel, that the only hope lay in a combination of democratic powers in conjunction with the U.S.S.R. to stop Hitler's expansionist aims. Mr. Dodd believed as early as 1934 that an agreement existed between Germany and Japan; he saw that this alliance meant war in the Far East as well as in Europe and, without any reference to collective security, he recommended it as the one practical way of avoiding the final horror of world war

In 1934 he believed that Germany's rearmament could still be stopped. That it was necessary to oppose Hitler he never doubted. His historical training—Mr. Dodd was a Professor of History at the University of Chicago and part of his student days were spent in Germany—saved him from some of the current errors of diplomacy. His liberal and nonconformist background made it impossible for him to indulge in that fashionable *Realpolitik* which regards moral issues as fit only for the deception of an ignorant public. He had so old-fashioned a prejudice in favour of trial before execution that the murders of June, 1934, were to him a final condemnation of Hitler, Göring and Goebbels. After June, 1934, he never spoke to these men or shook hands with them except when official business required. His diplomatic conduct was nevertheless scrupulously correct and he did all that was in his power to establish an understanding with von Neurath and Schacht. But he was shrewd enough to realise before long that these men were either helpless or insincere when they tried to reassure him about the tendencies of the regime. At a time when Mr. Baldwin was still telling the British public that we had no reason to fear German armaments, Mr. Dodd and Sir Eric Phipps, the British Ambassador, were agreeing with M. François-Poncet and indeed with all the other ambassadors in Berlin that the vast rearmament of Germany meant a determination to make war. Unhappily, Mr. Dodd watched the failure of the Powers to combine against Fascism; they gave way over Abyssinia and connived at the tragic farce of non-intervention in Spain which firmly cemented the German-Italian alliance and rendered precarious the whole position of the democratic Empires in Africa and the Mediterranean. Secondly he complained that Germany was not only permitted to rearm but was actually rearmed by British and American armament makers.

He had himself plenty of evidence of their activities. He describes conversations with Dr. Schacht who reported Germany's incapacity to pay her debts. Why, then, Mr. Dodd asked, was Germany able to pay for another hundred aeroplanes from a private firm in the U.S.A.? Dr Schacht "looked embarrassed and was about to deny it, but as he saw I was going to produce a document, he said: 'Yes, I suppose you know all about it, but we must arm.'"

The statesmen of the period could not see the wisdom of combining to prevent German aggression and German rearmament. Sir John Simon, Mr. Dodd reports, seemed "tricky." At Stresa, he tells us, Sir John sat in conference "with his eyes closed, perhaps asleep, until the Duce said: 'You know, all of you, that the Germans intend to annex everything to Bagdad!' That wakened the British Foreign Secretary."

Nor was Sir John the only one who would not understand the Nazis. Lord Lothian was frank on his visits to Berlin. In May, 1935,

> he indicated clearly that he favours a coalition of the democracies to block any German move in their direction and to turn Germany's course eastwards. That this might lead to a war between Russia and Germany does not seem to disturb him seriously. In fact he seems to feel this would be a good solution of the difficulties imposed on Germany by the Versailles Treaty. The problem of the democracies, as he sees it, is to find for Japan and Germany a stronger place in world affairs to which, in his opinion, they are entitled because of their power and tradition. He hopes this can be accomplished without any sacrifice to the British Empire and with as little destruction to human liberty as possible.

By May, 1937, Lothian went further. He

> praised Hitler for saving Germany in 1933 and referred to his long talk of May 3rd with the Führer, saying it was mostly about Mussolini and British-German relations, now quite critical... His hatred of France was revealed twice, as well as his dislike of Woodrow Wilson's effort in 1918-20. I could hardly make out just where he belonged in European alignments. He seemed to be more a Fascist than any other Englishmen I have met. Recent English criticism of Italy and especially Germany with reference to their barbarism in Spain bothered him.

If Lord Lothian surprised Mr. Dodd, Mr. Bullitt's transformation shocked him far more. For Bullitt, "to all intents and purposes enthusiastic" about the Soviet Union in 1934, believed in 1935 that the Germans and Japanese should "have their way" (so Mr. Dodd interprets Mr. Bullitt). But Russia, objected Mr. Dodd, with her vast population, would be excluded from both the Pacific and the Baltic. To this Mr. Bullitt replied: "Oh, that makes no difference."

> But I could not help adding: "You know this treatment of Russia over the last two hundred years has caused many wars." He replied only: "Ireland keeps England from the seas."

Commenting on this surprising remark Mr. Dodd says that "the President must know this man's mentality, but if so, how could he have appointed him Ambassador to Soviet Russia?" He attributes his change of view to the fact that Bullitt is the heir to a great fortune and was known as a liberal contributor to the Roosevelt campaign in 1932. He adds "My gift was $25."

This Bullitt incident is an example of many which troubled Mr. Dodd's honestly democratic and Puritanical outlook. Throughout his period in Berlin he loathed the expensive displays and entertainments at other Embassies, their banality, their fatiguing waste of time in formal conversation which could never be about anything. He detested the atmosphere of espionage; and suffered because so often he could do nothing to aid unfortunate suppliants from Nazi cruelty. What was the use of the constant approaches he was instructed to make about payment of Nazi debts to American bond-holders? What use to ask for mercy for innocent victims from those who had plotted their ruin or death? How could he be in sympathy with a diplomatic world which kowtowed to men like Göring, while it deliberately boycotted, as he says, the Russian ambassador who is "perhaps the best intellect in the diplomatic service here." (For himself Ambassador Dodd disliked Communism about as much as Nazism, but he saw the absolute military necessity of Russian friendship.) The climax is a conversation with Nevile Henderson, who, in June, 1937, took German annexations in Eastern Europe for granted and looked forward to a future in which

> England and her Empire is to dominate the seas along with the United States. England and Germany must come into close relations, economic and political, and control the world. He said: "France is a back number and unworthy of support. Franco is to control Spain." He seemed not to be aware of British-American opposition to the ruthless Nazi treatment of Catholics, Protestants and Jews. I wonder if Ambassador Henderson really represents his government? What would happen to Britain if Britain annexed all the peoples all the way to the Black Sea?

Ambassador Dodd's English publisher submitted this passage to Sir Nevile Henderson who, in a footnote, objects to this as a misleading account of his views. His explanation should be read: opinions will differ about whether it improves his case.

One of the most revealing sentences in this book comes from Dr. Schacht. In all his early discussion with Germany's Finance Minister, Mr. Dodd was assured that Dr. Schacht personally believed in free or at least freer trade, regarded "Autarkie" as nonsense and wanted good trading relations with the U.S.A. But by February, 1937, Dr. Schacht answered brusquely when asked how Mussolini got the money for the great road he was building in Africa: "Money does not have to be gotten now, we only issue paper to keep it circulating rapidly, thereby maintaining people at work." In a word, all the talk of co-operating with any other country had been so much dust in the eyes of foreign capitalists who believed that Hitler's main enemy was Bolshevism and who could be deluded into letting Hitler have the arms and raw materials without which he was not strong enough to destroy them. He was polite until ready for war. To seek power by trade and by money seemed to the new rulers of Germany the error of a commercial society. Power, which is always the aim of rulers, can come in the twentieth century, as it did in the days before capitalism, from plain loot and conquest. In a closed economy—possible when Europe and the world is conquered—there is no such thing as national bankruptcy; neither is there unemployment on the one hand or freedom to choose one's work on the other. In this fundamental point the Nazi system is socialist and similar to the Soviet system.

Here is the fundamental rivalry between the rulers of the Western democracies and the Nazis. They decided that their quarrel was irreconcilable when they realised that the Nazis would never share, never be bribed with money or spheres of influence. But this was not all. A commercial system has its own ethical code and decencies which a military state despises. And the Nazis, inspired by the idea of German world conquest, were utterly contemptuous of all the civilisation which had grown up in centuries of commercial life, which sprang from the Mediterranean and spread gradually through the whole Western world. To a man like Ambassador Dodd this theory was the final horror; to every American as well as to most Englishmen the rights of property are intimately and historically bound up with the rights of freedom of person, of speech, of association, and of ownership; with the basic concepts that a man is only punished after trial, that the State is the servant and not the master of the popular electorate and that learning and the arts must be given the chance to seek truth and beauty without State dictation. Thus the Nazi system is a challenge to "democracy" in all its aspects; to property and religion as well as to labour and to culture. In fighting the Nazis we, too, are ceasing to be a "money economy." How far will it prove possible in the democracies to disentangle money from civilisation?

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Peonies and Ponies is a witty comedy of manners set in Peking just before the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war. The problem for the English Colony—if problem is not too heavy a word for their slight preoccupations—was to find for themselves the appropriate reaction to a civilisation from which their few Chinese friends were already trying to seek an escape. "In the main, outside the Legation quarter there were worshippers of the past and exploiters of the past. The exploiters outnumbered the worshippers." Philip Flower, a bald middle-aged Londoner is the most extreme worshipper: he has "gone native," as Captain Gulley from the legation calls it. Vainly he relapses into Chinese clothes, adopts a Chinese boy and has him instructed in *The Three Character Classic*; his son dresses in his guardian's Norfolk jacket and looks up from an old *Illustrated London News* to gaze hungrily at a passing aeroplane. Mrs. Mascot is an exploiter at the other end of the scale; to her the Orient appears a romantic travelogue in glamorous technicolour, but she also knows the snob value in hard dollars of "Things Chinese." She finishes up the wife of a popular novelist, author of *Yashmak* and *The Jade Thumb-ring*, and departs with him to California, which she diagnoses correctly as a perfect sucker for an Oriental Craze. Between these two extremes is Elvira, who has come to Peking from highbrow Paris on the impetus of her own "vibrations." A sculptress of gigantic modern pieces, she had high hopes of China as a restorative to her flagging vitality: but her vibrations grow slack there; not even a blond and hairy American marine can succeed in tightening them. In the end she has an inspiration—Moscow, and leaves by the Trans-Siberian express. Among the minor characters there is a gust of Blimpdom from Captain Gulley who is rewarded by losing an ear to some bandits, and a squalid matrimonial mess in the Legation quarter.

All this is entertainingly and sharply observed. Here, for instance, is Veronica, the female half of this matrimonial mess:

> Veronica had none of the adaptibility of the more masculine, hard-riding happy-go-lucky type of Englishwoman who haunted Paomachung. Though she did not think of herself as such, she was purely insular; when she felt energetic, her voice was like a cool whiff from an English cottage-garden, when she was tired, like lavender mixed with pot-pourri, lady-like however indistinct. Her charm, her humour, her gush—sentences lavishly sprayed with superlatives—her insouciance, her smartness ever on the verge of dowdiness, that irrepressible temptation to add a necklace of moonstones at the last minute; her thin pointed face and manner of parting her hair; the whole amalgam was of the kind that thrives in England and runs to seed elsewhere.

Pointed, lively, thoroughly readable; but, one might complain, it's all been done before—early Huxley or as the publishers suggest *South Wind*. And if that were all—the expatriate butterflies displayed with their fripperty wings outspread on a new setting board—one might read *Peonies and Ponies* with the pleasure of nostalgia and find it a dexterous exercise in a manner which now seems a little dated. The little bit more comes in the hint of a real conflict in the lives of the Chinese characters. Mr. Acton is evidently highly qualified to understand and interpret to us the Chinese. His genuine affection for their way of life never degenerates into sentimentalising them. It is this feeling for China which gives the novel a sharp actuality and gives the reader a real feel of the scene. But more than that the Chinese girl, Yi, is as a character something fuller than a figure in a social comedy. The daughter of "liberal" parents she was sent to Paris as a student and, returning, finds herself uneasily balanced between two irreconcilable worlds. She is fit for neither, and faced with too difficult a problem of adaptation, she becomes a victim of an impersonal transition. Gay and entertaining as his present novel is, Mr. Acton is well qualified to treat more fully the conflict which is only touched on here. I hope the success of this novel will encourage him to do it.

Mr. Rex Warner's *The Aerodrome* is an allegorical fantasy. On the outskirts of a type English village there has been established an enormous aerodrome which, with its combination of the secret and the sinister, seems to threaten the traditional way of life of the countryside. It is a serious fault in the book, I think, that more than half is taken up with a conventionally fantastic plot—illegitimate sons, murders, adulteries, all the properties of melodrama—before we come to the kernel of the allegory, the Aerodrome itself. In the super cinema chapel, with tables in front of them on which are placed drinks and cigarettes, the pilots are initiated into their period of training with an address by the Air Vice-Marshal. The aim of the Air Force, he explains, is to create a wholly new kind of man freed from the shackles alike of the Past and the Future:

> Your business as members of the Air Force is first and foremost to obtain freedom through the recognition of necessity; and necessity is no soft and feeble thing. . . . Remember that we expect from you conduct of a quite different order from that of the mass of mankind. Your actions, when off duty, may appear and indeed should appear wholly irresponsible. Your purpose—to escape the bondage of time, to obtain mastery over yourselves and thus over your environment—must never waver.

Roy, the hero, who has abandoned the squalor of his family life to become a pilot, is taken by the Air Vice-Marshal on to his personal staff and learns there of the magnitude of the Air Vice-Marshal's designs, to establish the power of the Air Force élite over the country and to transform it, in complete disregard for traditional values, to a new way of life functional, efficient, collective. But in the village there are doubters, upholders of the old ways. Roy, through a revived interest in the details of his past, becomes disaffected and decides to face the Air Vice-Marshal with a refusal to carry on. His life is in danger. The Air Vice-Marshal (who turns out to be his father) puts the issue to him:

> Consider the record of crimes, hypocrisy and irresolution in [your mother's] family . . . what a record of confusion, deception, rankling hatred, low aims and indecision! One is stained by any contact with such people. Can you not see, and I am asking you for the last time, what I mean when I urge you to escape from all this, to escape from time and its bondage, to construct around you in your brief existence something that is guided by your own will, not forced upon you by past accidents, something of clarity, independence and beauty.

But Roy refused:

> If there had been guilt in the village there had been guilt also in the aerodrome, for the two worlds were not exclusive and by denying one or the other, the security that was gained was an illusion.

The collective life which aims at efficiency, with the slogan "freedom is the knowledge of necessity," leaves out of account the conflicts and individual values which make life worth living. "In spite of its symmetry and perfection," it is "a denial of life, its difficulty, its perplexity and its suffering rather than an affirmation of its nobility and its grandeur." Such it seems is the point of the fable.

I recommend *The Aerodrome* as an unusual kind of novel, though I cannot consider it a success. It is written in a graceful clean prose marred only by occasional lapses into false simplicity (a fault which is part and parcel of Mr. Warner's whole approach). The story within its melodramatic convention is exciting and once we reach the Aerodrome itself it takes on a meaning sharply revelant to the problem of our day. But both the balance of the book and its tone seem to me awry. The first part is much too long, the incidents too fantastic—they do not succeed, as do the most unexpected incidents in Kafka, in winning a kind of absolute belief for themselves by the naturalness with which they appear. Mr. Warner's machinery has a childish crudity about it which reminds one of early Auden, a prep-school delight in practical jokes which no longer seem so clever as they once did. This is a pity. For I believe the fable to be a form which we might use more, and in *The Professor* Mr. Warner seemed to have made an advance in clarity and tautness on *The Wild Goose Chase*. *The Aerodrome*, although I think it well worth reading, is for him a step back.

T. C. WORSLEY

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Still London's *moral* stands the fearful strain ;
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The Brothers spring, with plans for new attire,
Which Goering sees, and straightway in a storm,
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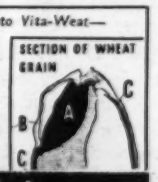

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SUGAR AND SPICE

The Story of J.M.B. By DENIS MACKAIL. *Peter Davies.* 11s. 6d.

This is Barrie's authorised biography, a full length affair of dates, diaries, people, the daily tedium and private hopes and tragedies of a successful author. Occasionally critical, Mr. Mackail makes no concise judgment about him, but rambles on discursively, playfully, sympathetically, generally on the surface but sometimes underneath at the proper moments. Here there is a candid dig at some blatant vanity; there, a forgiving caress. The manner is intimate. Mr. Mackail is not one of those official biographers who plank down a hundredweight or two of monumental masonry upon their hero's grave; but he does conduct a sort of affectionate whispering campaign, full of sly pokes and winking reminiscence. For the admirer of Barrie, this is just the thing; it is in fact almost the Barrie method.

"Oh, the cleverness of me," cried Peter Pan. A generation which cannot stomach the sniffling feyness and whimsicality of Barrie must grant his almost conscienceless skill and ingenuity as a journalist, story-teller and playwright. There are women in northern mythology, Mr. Mackail says of *Mary Rose*, who were only beautiful faces; when you went behind them there was nothing there. That sensation was always left by Barrie's work. There was a tingle, a faint stinging, an emotional itch; never the full flow, except in fantasy itself; the thinness of it all left one never quite indignant because of the sheer cleverness behind it, the gift of surprise, of almost impertinent invention, and a pawky refusal to give explanations. Barrie knew better than most writers the effectiveness of suddenly ringing off. People went about looking for the meaning of *Mary Rose*, but Barrie's was one of those egoistic wits which come to no conclusions. In reality he was not a gay writer, or a sad one, as people said, but a very depressing one. In books like *The Little White Bird*, for all the drip, drip, drip of the icing as it melts off the cake, there was a substratum of macabre, ugly hopelessness. The grin is very often on the other side of his face. His public—if one noted the reaction of one's elders correctly at the time—would go stony-eyed, or give a shocked curl to their lips, as they swallowed the sudden hard pill which was embedded in the luxurious bitter-sweet jam. Like all clever people, Barrie liked making others uncomfortable and nothing makes us so uncomfortable as the public display of the top layer of our sentiments.

In his attenuated way Barrie successfully played tricks which other dramatists like Shaw had to fight for; the practical Fabian woman with the twelve pound look was easily put across by giving her a sprite-like or pathetic face. They are womanly women. Shaw meant something serious when he made his dukes into butlers; Barrie turns his butler into a gentleman out of sheer mischievousness, without meaning anything.

It is an interesting fact revealed by Mr. Mackail that Barrie, who regarded himself as a kind of expert on the absorbent mother, was an enthusiastic reader of D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*. To the tentative poignancy of Margaret Ogilvy on her pedestal, *Sons and Lovers* was the counter attack of reality, for Paul's situation in that book was very close to Barrie's own. There was the same urge to equal or surpass the brother who had died, to get away from the shock of his mother's hostility and yet to win her. Mr. Mackail is as candid as an official biographer can be about the emotional calamities which in later life sprang from this dislocation in Barrie's childhood. It is well known how tragedy struck at him again and again; indeed Barrie's tragedies and his sadness were a sort of British institution. All was—and one says this without any sort of reproach—grist for the mill.

It is a very involved and unseizable character, a sort of human spinning top, which Mr. Mackail draws. All the metaphysical bent of the Scots seems to have been translated into personal mystification: Barrie is always watching Barrie being Barrie and has one eye on the essential audience. There is the loneliness, perhaps the emptiness, of the actor. In old age, when he was neglected, he posed as being full up with engagements. Sometimes, Mr. Mackail recalls, one went to see him in the evenings at Adelphi Terrace, where he sat coughing and smoking too much by the wood fire, and instead of hours of "inimitableness," one had to watch the small figure pacing up and down in silence, and responding with no more than a bleak "Caledonian grunt" to the efforts of the frantic visitor. There was mystification about everything: about the firm refusal of a knighthood and a quiet pocketing later on of a baronetcy—there was the publication of the Captain Scott letter, the plumping of the Peter Pan statue in Kensington Gardens, the craving for political influence—alluring to the vanity of most writers, of course—and the delicious hint of being mixed up in the negotiations for the Anglo-Irish treaty, though Mr. Lloyd George, when asked about it all, hasn't any recollection of Barrie being mixed up in it at all. In the end, one sees that the real attraction of Barrie was that his right hand always knew what his left hand was doing. Under the imp was the relentless Scot. In an otherwise silly novel like *When a Man's Single*, which all young writers were rightly recommended to read, one admires his nimble understanding of that very Edwardian art—the art of success. Bennett, in his emphatic provincial way, wrote manuals on success and everyone has resented the vulgarity; Barrie surrounded the subject with jokes, so that no one could quite see what he was doing. And this lightened the soggy glamour and gloom of commercial literature. Arch as Mr. Mackail often is, and very clever at not giving his subject away, he has given an official *Life* a pleasantly unofficial air.

V. S. PRITCHETT

DURHAM COMPANY

Durham Company. By UNA POPE-HENNESSY. *Chatto and Windus.* 7s. 6d.

Dame Una Pope-Hennessy has given us an attractive book, which cannot be classified, and therefore will be classified, by librarians, as *Belles Lettres*. Ostensibly she is concerned with the literary associations of places in Durham; what she gives is some delicate criticism and reconstructions, at once scholarly and imaginative, of bygone characters and incidents. Obviously, such a book must be well written, and Dame Una writes well enough, though occasionally without that regard for language which one has a right to expect of an essayist. To talk of "antiquarian things" is to talk nonsense; "he was enormously dependent on his womenfolk" is not pretty; neither is "A lesson that the day for personal possessing was over, that deindividualization was to be the fate of houses and men, that England was being communized without a revolution," though here the author may defend herself by saying that she uses ugly words to state ugly facts. Anyhow an elegant essayist should be incapable of leaving uncorrected in proof such a misquotation as "Milton hadst thou been living in this hour." "With no audience than that of the gentry of the Hall" is plain bad grammar.

However, such lapses, though disagreeable, will be forgiven easily in a book which is sure to please well-educated people. The author has intelligence, taste and knowledge of men and books, and of women too. Her research,

though not purporting to go very far, has been skilful and well directed; so that what she has to tell us is seldom trite and is sometimes surprising: her comments are generally acute. She has a happy gift of recounting freshly stories, well enough known to deep and diligent readers, but by no means familiar to all members of the London Library: for instance, the story of Robert Surtees, of Mainsforth's sly impositions on the credulity of Sir Walter Scott, or of Wordsworth's mysterious doings in France, his revolutionary ardours, his mistress and his bastard.

I will confess that the first essay to which I turned was the one on *Hamsterley and Jorrocks*. There has been hot controversy of late about the exact geographical situation of the Jorrocks-James Pigg country, and particularly as to which English spa is described under the pseudonym of Handley Cross. The argument having been conducted, for the most part, by what Richard Bragg would have called "downright fox-hunters," the notion that the novelist might have had more than one watering-place in mind has been hardly entertained. I was curious to see what this subtle and cultivated lady would have to say about it, and of course she says what I hoped she would say and what I am sure is true: "We may take it that when it is not Northumberland it is Surrey, and when it is not Kent it is Sussex, and when none of these places it may be Durham." Moreover, by contrasting him with Dickens, and citing William Morris—"he was a master of life," Dame Una Pope-Hennessy, "though but a weak woman," shows that she recognises the greatness of Robert Smith Surtees. She does not fully appreciate him, I think, or she would have emphasised the fact that, alone amongst Victorian novelists—unless we are to reckon Peacock Victorian, Surtees is never sentimental, except maybe once or twice about hunted hares. At any rate he has no illusions about human beings, rustic or town-bred, rich or poor. Also he can roll out, at need, a positively Shakespearean image—"Let me from the bonded warehouse of my knowledge. . . ." You cannot say all that for Dickens or Thackeray.

The most accomplished essay in the collection is, I suppose, *The Byrons at Seaham*. The author retells the old, old story, but tells it with a fresh accent, nicely seasoning the hash with scraps of odd information. It is satisfactory to find that not one drop of whitewash, and only a pint of pity, is allowed to fall on that intolerable woman, Lady Byron. But the best pages in the book are unquestionably those devoted to Sockburn; and of these the most precious those which describe with well controlled emotion that crucial moment in the history of literature when Wordsworth was falling sedately in love with Mary Hutchinson—

> And she I cherished turned her wheel
> Beside an English fire,

and Coleridge passionately, agonisedly and gloriously with her sister, Sara—

> All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
> Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
> All are but ministers of love,
> And feed his sacred flame.

In the Grasmere manuscript, as the author does well to remind us, the desperate lines ran—

> O Sara! we receive but what we give
> And in our life alone does Nature live;
> Ours is her wedding garment, ours her shroud.

But Coleridge was married, so for "Sara" read "Lady"; and so the world was enriched with the *Ode in Dejection*. It is in writing about Sockburn, about Wordsworth, Coleridge, Dorothy and the Hutchinsons that Dame Una Pope-Hennessy shows her quality at its best. She writes like a scholar and a lady. She is treading on sacred ground, ground sacred to poetry and love, and over it she moves quietly and sometimes beautifully.

CLIVE BELL

REPORTING THE WAR

Post D: Some Experiences of an Air-Raid Warden. By JOHN STRACHEY. *Gollancz.* 3s. 6d.

The Road to Bordeaux. By C. DENIS FREEMAN and DOUGLAS COOPER. *Cresset Press.* 8s. 6d.

The Wounded Don't Cry. By QUENTIN REYNOLDS. *Cassell.* 6s.

Britain Can Take It. The Book of the Film. Commentary by QUENTIN REYNOLDS. *Murray.* 1s.

These books give a cross-section of reporting from various fronts. Mr. Strachey writes as an A.R.P. warden in London during the September Blitz; Messrs. Freeman and Cooper were ambulance-drivers with the French army attacked and retreating; and Mr. Reynolds is an American correspondent who has been wherever the wires were hottest. Much of the material—from a journalist's point of view—is new; but Mr. Strachey is the only one of these writers to have recognised the fact. The test of any war book at the moment is whether it makes war more real or not; Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* does this magnificently, remote though the Guadarrama mountains may seem to-day; in a lesser degree Mr. Strachey also succeeds in discovering and sharpening experience. His *Post D*, sections of which have already appeared in these pages, is a remarkable piece of writing. What he has achieved may seem at first sight simple: an account in the third person describing realistically a number of "incidents" in a Chelsea sector. The official term "incident," used by wardens themselves, is almost the key-word of his narrative. It puts bombs and the dead and dying into a cool category. On Mr. Strachey, who became a warden almost by accident, both the coolness and the calamity struck strangely. His detachment, in the face of horror, has thus something of what Auden calls "the surgeon's idea of pain." He experienced no grand emotions or false griefs, being on a job; being new on a job, he discovered things with an immense curiosity. The tone of his writing from beginning to end is deliberately quiet and matter-of-fact, with the sort of understatement that gives conviction to a story like *Lady Into Fox*, except that here the events are real. It discovers a world on our own doorstep as remote in its way as the airman's cockpit in the clouds. A few sounds, sights and smells traced in the night; a ruined house where the rescue men are clawing away earth and rubble for buried people; while looking for a boy, they uncover the body of a fat middle-aged woman. "Digging for Mrs. Miller," which readers of this journal will no doubt remember, seems to me the best piece of descriptive writing that the war has yet produced. It is the third here of ten chapters which give a pretty complete picture of air raids night after night, and the warden's routine in dealing with them. One may think, as one goes along, that Mr. Strachey is missing some detail—the burnt-rubber, rotten-mushroom smell of an evacuated street, for example; but almost certainly one will find it a few pages later, conveyed with piercing exactness. Despite realism *Post D* is not an unbearably grim book to read; the activity and talk of the wardens have a curious light "apartness" which the oversensitive reader will find reassuring.

One effect of writing as excellent and considered as Mr. Strachey's is that it kills anything else within range stone-dead. I should probably have found *The Road to Bordeaux* more impressive if I had read it at any other time. It is in fact a very good, straightforward account of the adventures of two English ambulance drivers with the French Army. It begins in Paris before invasion and ends three months later with the escape back to England in a destroyer. Most of the book describes the appalling chaos of the retreat, the roads jammed with several million people making south. Auxerre, Bourges, Limoges, Bordeaux: the same plight of soldiers and civilians everywhere, drenched by rain, harassed by the threat of the enemy, without petrol, even without food. Mr. Freeman and Mr. Cooper have related in admirable detail a story we know in outline already. They are vivid and reliable witnesses.

Those who saw the film *Britain Can Take It* may be disappointed to find that the commentator, Mr. Quentin Reynolds, is better to hear than to read. *The Wounded Don't Cry* suffers badly, like a Priestley postcript, by being read in cold blood, but its real fault is that while Mr. Reynolds can do a first-rate job

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of journalism, these jobs when strung together, with himself in the middle, add up to rather little. *The Wounded Don't Cry* is a very readable book about its author's adventures as a correspondent in Europe. He haunts Paris, goes to the front, leaves Paris for Bordeaux, Bordeaux for London and a flat in Berkeley Square, where he had the advantage (from the journalist's angle) of being bombed, but not badly bombed, twice. All this is vividly recounted in a hammering typewriter style, but the figure of the author eating large lunches everywhere while the refugees stream by or the bombs fall, seems hardly a real journalist at all, but a character from an early Hemingway novel. Everything comes second to getting the story—and being the sort of person to get it. This becomes rather a bore. And a good deal of exaggeration creeps in. "To-day more than half London sleeps underground" he writes at the beginning of September: that is, in round figures, three and a half million people. Such calculations, however, would take the bloom off the story.

Britain Can Take It is a "book of the film," and contains besides Mr. Reynolds' commentary forty admirable "stills," several of which, I think, did not reach the screen.

G. W. STONIER

ONE OF THE ELECT

The Secret of Pascal. By H. F. STEWART. *Cambridge University Press.* 5s.

Pascal. Presented by FRANÇOIS MAURIAC (Living Thoughts Library). *Cassell.* 3s. 6d.

Jansenism, among the devoutly-minded, appears to be in the ascendant; at least that aspect of Jansenism which, to the uninitiated like myself, joins hands with Calvinism. Karl Barth, Niebuhr, and the many admirers of Pascal are raising, in a world fighting for democracy, the old cry: "We can't have Heaven crammed." Perhaps it is in truth a revival of the one true doctrine. Perhaps it is yet another symptom of our violent reaction from the optimistic humanism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a reaction born of the bitter realisation that man's responsibility to himself is just too great, if we have nothing more secure to lean upon than what has been called "the slender integrity of his own puny reason and the wavering uncertainty of his own ethical judgment." (W. K. Jordan.) We hunger after leadership, in theololgy as in politics, we long for security, moral as well as economic. We would alleviate the enormous burden of trying to know and to do what is right by accepting the faith that we are hopelessly sinful and that only Grace, mysterious Grace, can redeem any one of us.

Perhaps, too, the humility that results from humanism, once it has ceased to be complacent, is too galling. "All men are equal," but in our heart of hearts we long for eminence. And since the nobilities of birth and money are alike discredited, while that of worth is too difficult to define, too wearisome to acquire, we take refuge in pride of blood or race or revelation, pride of belonging to the one orthodox Party, or pride in being mystically one of the Elect.

However that may be, here are two books destined to present Pascal in an attractive light before a public eager for spiritual guidance. Mr. Stewart, who has already written on the "Holiness of Pascal," now deals persuasively with his more mundane gifts, his logic, his morality, his sense of style. He shows us his hero as a lucid thinker, an exquisite writer, a profound student of mankind. And indeed these are Pascal's magnificent tools, which he uses to lure us into an acceptance of his own faith in the infinite wretchedness of man, the infinite goodness of God, and the immense gulf that lies between them, a gulf bridgeable by no human effort but only by Grace. There are, I suspect, men of Pascal and men of Montaigne, born not made. Mr. Stewart's book will delight the former. I do not think that it will make converts.

Neither will M. François Mauriac. "Pascal," he says, "released a tempest of infinite love over the men of Montaigne." Possibly, but it is a love so infinite as to be unrecognisable. One feels more of the warmth of human love in Montaigne's affectionate mockery than in all Pascal's tortured pity and contempt. In any case, M. Mauriac's publishers have served him ill. The selection of "living thoughts" is put together carelessly and quite without scholarship. It is almost impossible to check their accuracy or their context by reference to Brunschvicg's edition, as the extracts are neither numbered nor paginated. The translation is appalling—"The eternal silence of these infinite spaces frightens me" for "Le silence éternel de ces espaces infinis m'effraie." And all is peppered with what I can only charitably conclude are printer's errors. How else account for the shocking mistranslation of St. Augustine on page 123? Or for this delightful sentence on page 40?—"So much the art of persuasion consists as much in that of pleasing as in that of convincing, so much more are men governed by caprice than by reason." In Pascal's French this pretty tangle resolves itself as follows: "*De sorte que l'art de persuader consiste autant en celui d'agréer qu'en celui de convaincre, tant les hommes se goiwernent plus par caprice que par raison.*"

FLORA GRIERSON

The Creed of Christ. By GERALD HEARD. *Cassell.* 6s.

This volume of sermons deals with the Lord's Prayer, and will cause widespread gratification as a proof that war brings men back to the Christian Faith. It is true that Mr. Heard has not yet brought himself to accept some of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity: his Christology is, at best, Arian; and he hedges regrettably on the matter of personal immortality. But large sections of his book echo faithfully the edifying sentiments customary in our pulpits. He possesses to a remarkable degree that gift for analogy which has always proved so valuable to divines. And he is nothing if not up-to-date: once a popular writer about science, he uses the material thus acquired with great daring. His frequent comparison of prayer to wireless waves is calculated to interest a large public. Even the theory of evolution is similarly turned to good purpose, and it will gratify many to find agnostic speculations thus twisted into weapons for discomforting their inventors.

Mr. Heard might be reproached with isolating those sections of the Gospel message that specially appeal to him. He condemns "righteous anger," regardless of the words of wrath so frequently reported by the Evangelists. And while he does not here emphasise his pacifist views, he maintains that the training of saints is the only valid answer to Hitler. He never faces the fact that a Nazi victory would make such training absolutely impossible, a fact that it is perhaps easier to overlook in California than in Prague or Warsaw.

The merit of Mr. Heard's book is that it is based upon the experience of the great mystics. But he seems to think it possible to apply mass-production to mystics, whereas history suggests that they are at least as rare as great artists. Some readers may consider that mystical experience, which has always proved difficult to express in words, is more happily conveyed by the erotic metaphors of poets like St. John of the Cross than by Mr. Heard's talk of entropy, mutations, radioactivation and photo-synthesis. But it would be unfair to doubt that these addresses, so obviously sincere, made a deep effect when they were delivered in a Congregational church in Hollywood.

Harrap's Shorter French and English Dictionary. Edited by J. E. MANSON. Vol. I, French-English. *Harrap.* 8s. 6d.

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(French-English) is in its way as remarkable a piece of editing and book production. It is well printed with a double column to the page. Though the book is no larger and not a great deal heavier than *Gone With the Wind*, Mr. Manson has succeeded in retaining 31,550 out of the original 58,000 words. Space has been saved by including many adverbs and nouns under the adjective, where that has been the main entry. Some variations of meaning have necessarily been omitted, and no entry runs to more than a column. But for most purposes this Shorter Dictionary will serve where twenty years ago one would have turned to a dictionary four times its size and price. We notice that, as in the larger dictionary, special attention has been paid to familiar meanings, though Mr. Manson stops short of some of the colloquialisms to be found in Mr. Kettridge's *French for English Idioms*. This is the companion volume to its author's *French Idioms and Figurative Phrases*. Mr. Kettridge is prodigal with quotations mostly from seventeenth and eighteenth century writers, and, unlike most smaller dictionaries, his can be read with pleasure. Its chief drawback is that sometimes one has to look under two entries before finding the idiom one wants. It is difficult to see how this could have been avoided, and after some testing this phrase book proves to be both serviceable and thorough.

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Week-end Competitions

No. 583

Set by Cyril Connolly

It has become the habit of some critics to couple the names of Joyce and Proust. We offer the usual prizes for a piece of Joyce written by Proust (a note, for instance, on the Salon of Mrs. Bloom) or of Proust written by Joyce (*e.g.* Buck Charlus). Entry not to exceed 250 words, Proust in the Scott-Moncrieff version.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Tuesday, 15th April.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 580

Set by Roger Marvell

Mr. A. P. Herbert, writing in *Punch*, seems to be under the delusion that the reviewing staff of this journal has emigrated *en bloc* to the U.S.A. In fact none of our regular contributors has gone to America, but a number of them are in uniform. We offer the usual prizes for a set of verses (not more than 12 lines), such as a soldier, sailor or airman might write, comparing his present activities with his old work of reviewing, in these columns, novels, paintings, films, or gramophone records.

Report by Roger Marvell

Disappointing to relate, Mr. A. P. Herbert has not sent in an entry. It would have been such an elegant action to devote a quarter of an hour to winning this competition. A number of neat verses have, however, been submitted. Mr. Jack Maunder, a soldier who was a film-critic (not in this journal), ends with a version of a standard Army joke :

On parade, up spoke the Sergeant-Major,
" In civvy life, a critic of the screen ? "
" Yes, Sir," I answered, feeling honoured,
" Ah ! just the man to whitewash the latrine ! "

Miss Jenifer Wayne makes the film-critic, turned sailor, exclaim : " But I hadn't a notion what motion the ocean Could actually make." N. P. Meadway sends good verses by a novel-reviewer in the R.A.F. Here are two stanzas :

I dropped the vitriolic phrase
With scorn I mowed pretension down ;
I now, with sticks of bombs, erase
A harbour, factory or town.

When I return, again a scribe,
Rejoicing at the dawn of peace,
I shall regret that, as I jibe,
I cannot pull the bomb-release !

Sir Robert Witt, I. C. Saul and W. H. Victory were well in the running, J. M. Soesan, John Thornton, " X," Nancy Gunter and I.R.I.S. also did well. If there were three prizes I should give one to Horace Vigor, who had the courage to be serious. Here are four lines from his Airman, late reviewer of gramophone records :

Black disks revolved ; the imponderable world
Of sound absorbed me, silent. Now in lieu
Of those rotations, mightier hubs have whirled
Me to destroy the silence of the blue.

M. Tomalin deserves the second prize. Of the three poems he sent, all good, two are offensive to Mr. Herbert ; the prize is given to the third :

When I reviewed the General's book,
With public merriment I shook,
The end of which is yet to be—
To-morrow he's reviewing me.

It is fitting that the best entry should have been contributed by one of those about whom Mr. Herbert was so libellous, a regular contributor to THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION. The other competitors will, I am sure, not only acknowledge the justice of the award, but welcome the name of the winner, Mr. John Mair :

LAMENT

Provocative as blurbs, the clouds imply
Fantastic landscapes to my aerial eye.
Yet part, familiar country to display
As prim as Priestley, flat as Hemingway.
Where cities, huge as Proust, exhaust the earth
And spread about them labyrinthine dearth ;
Awaiting with rhinocerine aplomb
The drastic criticism of the bomb.

Airman is merely critic overblown,
Locked in a little cosmos of his own,
With power, if will be bad and aim be good,
To kill more Keatses than a Gifford could.

JOHN MAIR

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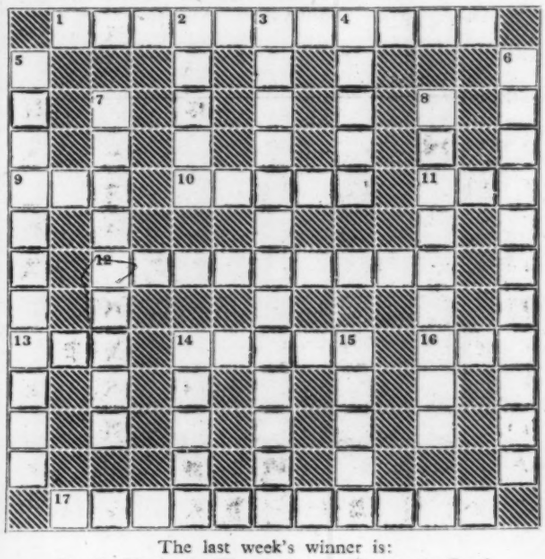

The last week's winner is:
P. C. Hoyland, The Spinney, Hanworth Road, Hampton-on-Thame:

ACROSS

1. Astride pack-horses ? (6 & 5)
9. A city in America, no matter which. (3)
10. Is he entitled to say he's broke ? (5)
11. Am no longer in love but it's not your affair. (3)
12. However can you make such a fool of me ? (9)
13 & 14. Fifty per cent. of the King's supporters ? Just fancy ! (8)
14. See 13.
16 *rev.* & 4. Bad luck to be in *delirium tremens* because of water shortages. (8)
17. Salvation Army Lassie who made a beast of herself ? (1, 3, 2, 1 & 4)

DOWN

2. Cross 1st Class ! (5)
3. Not a bad time for Mr. Churchill ? (4 & 9)
4. See 16.
5. Parson gets a promissory note on the sly. (11)
6. Bridge hand ? (7 hyphen 4)
7. What writers make bows at Court ? (9)
8. Take the lot and then some ! (9)
14. Hug by the hundred on the Heath. (5)
15. Blessed is a Commons Member (or Upper House, to be frank). (5)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

V	A	U	N	T	E	R	Y	■	T	R	O	W
I	■	S	■	O	■	■	■	■	A	■	I	■
S	E	A	S	O	N	■	G	O	T	T	E	N
A	■	G	■	T	■	S	■	■	■	T	■	D
■	■	E	■	I	■	I	N	S	T	A	L	L
F	■	S	■	N	■	T	■	■	■	N	■	A
L	■	■	O	G	I	T	R	E	V	■	■	S
O	■	T	■	■	■	I	■	X	■	G	■	S
O	V	E	R	R	U	N	■	P	■	A	■	■
R	■	N	■	■	■	G	■	O	■	R	■	I
I	N	N	A	T	E	■	A	S	I	D	E	S
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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By URBANUS

BUDGET EVE—MR. LYTTELTON'S CONCENTRATION OF PROFITS—MANUFACTURERS' VERSUS DISTRIBUTORS' EQUITIES

THE Budget eve is no time for confident markets, especially in a war costing nearly £4,000 millions a year. It is small wonder that the gilt-edged market should come back after its recent rise when it found that the revenue deficit for the last financial year was £2,458 millions. It was little comfort for it to know that savings had reached £1,350 millions and that the rest of the gap was met by sales of gold and securities abroad and by the accumulation of sterling funds in London on the part of our Dominions. How far can these extraordinary receipts go? Every one likes to talk about "this humbug of finance" when the figures seem so astronomical and irrelevant to our petty daily life and expenditures, but anon comes the Chancellor and puts our income tax up to, say, 10s. in the £ or clamps another impost on our common use of beer, tobacco or travelling. The Stock Exchange is, of course, more concerned about the Chancellor's treatment of company matters. It is fairly expecting a revision of his Excess Profits Tax on the grounds that 10 per cent. or 20 per cent. of present excess profits, which are lent to the Treasury free of interest during the rest of the war, will provide a timely re-employment or "reconstruction of business" fund when peace comes. There may be a special concession to tin and other mining companies with short lives which are unfairly being asked to pay a capital tax when E.P.T. is levied on profits arising from a war output in excess of standard—fixed at 130 per cent. in the case of tin to enable America to accumulate a war reserve of metal. But there is one company tax which I would like to see the Chancellor raise—the Corporations Tax. Last year E.P.T. produced a revenue of £72 millions but Corporation Tax at 1s. in the £ only £24 millions. This proves that the wealthy combines in the consumption-goods trades, such as brewery and tobacco companies, with a stable record of earnings and therefore with very little liability to E.P.T., are escaping their proper contribution to the finance of the war. Corporation Tax should at least be doubled and there is a case for raising it from 1s. to 4s. in the £.

* * *

The Stock Exchange did not seem to mind Mr. Oliver Lyttelton's explanation to the House of Commons of his scheme for concentration of production. Why should it? The shares in which it deals are virtually those of large-size companies which will form the nucleus factories in which production will be concentrated. And the great advantage of concentrating in one factory working at full time the output of, say, two factories working at half-time is that overhead expenses will be saved, the costs of the restricted production cheapened and the balance of profits increased. Mr. Lyttelton gave one illuminating example. Three firms, having four factories, are to concentrate their production in one factory. Their total turnover is £274,000 a year. The saving in overhead expenses as a result of this concentration is no less than £28,000 or between 10 per cent. and 11 per cent. of the total value of the turnover. This example was calculated to whet the appetite of the Stock Exchange for the equity shares of home trade manufacturers, for it implied something between a 50 per cent. and a 100 per cent. increase in the prevailing level of profits. Mr. Lyttelton was careful to point out that his scheme did not favour the large companies against the small. It was open to the small companies to get together among themselves and submit their own schemes of concentration, which would be accepted by the Board of Trade if they complied with the conditions and ratios of concentration laid down for the particular industry. There is no reason to doubt the good intentions of Mr. Lyttelton and his advisers in the wartime application of the principles of concentration, which is an essential war policy of economic mobilisation, but what we must be careful to avoid is the application of this policy to the peacetime reconstruction of industry. The public must be on its guard against an unholy alliance of the big employers and the large trade unions to pattern British industry with "concentration" mergers and combines occupying positions of virtual monopoly. High prices and the exploitation of the consumer are the end of peacetime concentration. To provide for the maximum employment after the war, most of the home trade industries should be split up as far as possible into small units, specialising in the individual styles and high-class workmanship which have given British exports of pottery, glass, leather goods, cosmetics, and mens' and womens' clothing the best of all advertised names.

* * *

I referred last week to the coming concentration of the retail trade Mr. Lyttelton followed up Captain Waterhouse's hint by telling the House of Commons that he would "shortly address himself" to the problem of concentrating shops. This does not mean that the existing level of profits of the big distributors—the departmental and chain stores—will be further reduced. Indeed, the saving of overheads through concentration will increase their profits just as it will in the case of manufacturers. But I would emphasise my point that, generally speaking, the Stock Exchange is still overvaluing the distributors' equities as compared with the manufacturers'. I promise to give some examples next week.

Strength—Stability

Extracts from the 88 Annual Report to be presented to the Shareholders at the Annual General Meeting at Halifax on Monday, April 7th, 1941

ADVANCED ON MORTGAGES		£1,976,850
MORTGAGE ASSETS		£100,539,381
LIQUID ASSETS	In Trustee Securities	£17,720,140
	Cash at Banks and in hand	£6,113,837
TOTAL ASSETS		£125,068,992
SHARE AND DEPOSIT FUNDS		£118,505,404

PROFITS—The balance of profit for the year after making provision for all management expenses, Income-Tax, National Defence Contributions, and Interest due to Depositors up to the date of the accounts amounted to £2,850,145. Appropriations have been made to Investing Shareholders of Interest and Bonus £2,657,952.

TOTAL RESERVE FUNDS AND UNDIVIDED PROFIT £5,992,778

COPY OF BALANCE SHEET FREE ON APPLICATION

HEAD OFFICES - HALIFAX GENERAL MANAGERS—DAVID W. SMITH, F.C.I.S. F. E. WARBRECK HOWELL, LL.D.

LONDON DISTRICT OFFICE—HALIFAX HOUSE, STRAND, W.C.2
CITY OFFICE—62, MOORGATE, E.C.2

BIRMINGHAM - - 26-28, COLMORE ROW
BELFAST - 14, DONEGALL SQUARE WEST
EDINBURGH - - 75, GEORGE STREET
GLASGOW - - 119, ST. VINCENT STREET
LEEDS - 32, COMMERCIAL STREET
LIVERPOOL - - 37, DALE STREET
MANCHESTER - - - 130, DEANSGATE
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